

THE JOURNAL
OF
A RECLUSE

Property of
Don R. Adney

Santa Monica, Calif.
Nov. 10, 1943

THE JOURNAL OF A RECLUSE

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JOURNAL OF A REISE



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Completed - Nov. 10, 1943.

a Book that, once opened before the eye, reflects the whole of life in a few fleeting hours; and once a taste is taken, the appetite for its bitter truth is awakened and never satisfied, or even calmed until the whole story has been devoured. The truths here are truly, bitter, but nevertheless truth. It is life that we see pass in these pages, and I have acquired by the reading a little deeper sensibility of the wisdom of living. In my later years, when I have lived today's I can now only desire, I will want to read this book again, and find the solace and comfort that comes in comparing two lives. It is this book that has quickened within me a love for reading auto-biography, for in auto-biography alone are found the reasons behind actions and behavior while biographies of another nature are bare, and reveal only the action without the necessity of purpose.



JUDITH
From the painting by C. Allori

THE JOURNAL
OF A
RECLUSE

*TRANSLATED FROM THE
ORIGINAL FRENCH*

[Fisher, Mary]



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CONTENTS

PART I—SUNRISE AND NOON

CHAPTER	PAGE
TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE	v.
I. EARLY MEMORIES	3
II. A HAPPY ACCIDENT	17
III. A TUTOR OF THE OLD RÉGIME	26
IV. LOOKING FORWARD	36
V. ON FOREIGN SHORES	47
VI. A FABLE FOR COMMUNISTS AND DREAMERS OF HUMAN PERFECTIBILITY	53
VII. STILL LEARNING	58
VIII. A WOMAN IN REVOLT	63
IX. THE OLD, OLD PATHWAY, JUST WIDE ENOUGH FOR TWO	83
X. TRAVELING AGAIN	92
XI. COMPLICATIONS	101
XII. EN ROUTE FOR AMERICA	109
XIII. UNDER THE ROD	121
XIV. LA VITA NUOVA	132
XV. A NEW ACQUAINTANCE	137

PART II—AFTERNOON AND EVENING

I. A VOICE FROM THE PAST	157
II. DREAMING ONCE MORE	186
III. TRYING TO KEEP STEP TOGETHER	195
IV. A FIRE-SIDE CHAT	206
V. STORM AND STRESS	212
VI. THE SURPRISE	226

CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
VII. THE RELAPSE	230
VIII. DARKNESS	239
IX. DAWN	250
X. AMONG THE SCHOOL-MASTERS	256
XI. AN EXPERIMENT IN ALTRUISM	274
XII. REUNION	287
XIII. EDUCATING A GIRL	293
XIV. A BROKEN SPIRIT	307
XV. BOOKS AND TRAVEL	313
XVI. TEMPESTE D'ANIME	319
XVII. LOOKING AT PICTURES	326
XVIII. SEED-TIME AND HARVEST	329

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

Two years ago, I was traveling for my pleasure, and incidentally for my profit, along the Pacific Coast of the United States, and found myself in a small town situated on Bellingham Bay, in the State of Washington. The town is probably not above fifty or sixty years old; and perhaps for a long time will retain a certain raw, unfinished appearance of youth, owing to its situation too near Seattle and Vancouver, to hope to have any commercial importance. However, two or three saw-mills, and a factory for canning salmon, give it a few internal resources, sufficient to keep it alive.

One day, walking along a railroad leading out of town, skirting the bay and traversing a beautiful forest, my attention was caught by a handsome shrub, which I had seen too often in Scotland and Ireland to mistake for an indigenous plant. It was the broom, bright with yellow blossoms, and a magnificent specimen at that. It grew on a cliff, at some distance above my head. Being a botanist in a mild sort of way, my curiosity was excited. It had been planted there, no doubt, but by whom? Probably there was a house near by—the home of some emigrant. I was thirsty; I might ask for a drink and casually learn how the broom had found its way across the sea to bloom so brilliantly on the edge of an American forest.

The bank was steep, but I made my way to the top without difficulty; and discovered, as I surmised, a fence not many feet beyond the bank, and behind it a small log hut. No smoke came from the chimney, and the long grass about it seemed untrodden. I climbed the fence and approached the house. Then I noticed

that the door, concealed by the projecting logs, was open; and I caught a glimpse of a woman's dress. I knocked twice at the door before the woman heard me; and when she rose with a start and came towards me, I saw that her eyes were red and swollen with weeping. She was a beautiful woman, past her first youth, but still in the full splendor of a perfect maturity. That she was not an ordinary woman, I saw at the first glance; and when she spoke, her voice had that unmistakable accent which accompanies all real culture.

I apologized for my intrusion, and told her that a long walk in the sunlight had made me thirsty, and that I had ventured to call for a drink of water.

"There is no water in the house at present," she answered, "but if you go down the bank, out at that little gate yonder, you will find a spring of cool water and a tin cup on a ledge of rock near by."

"Thank you, Madame; but before I go, may I ask you how that broom happens to grow just outside the fence yonder? I have never seen it except in Europe, and I do not think that it is a native of this country."

"You are quite right; he planted it here, from seeds brought from Scotland. Pardon me, I mean my uncle. Stop—are you in a hurry? You look like a man of judgment, of education; and see here"—she spoke hastily, the color coming and going in her cheeks—"I have here——" she turned over the pages of a pile of note-books on the table before her, then without finishing her sentence, asked abruptly:

"Are you a reader? Do you know good books?"

"I have lived among them all my life. I ought to know them. At any rate, I have definite opinions about them, and know what I like."

"Exactly," she said with a little note of pleasure. "I thought so. Isn't it strange how one sometimes knows people at the very first glance? I, too, know what pleases me,—books that leave a sweet taste in my mouth—that without asceticism sharpen my sense

of duty—that like mountain airs, filled with the odor of the pines, blow over me, refreshing, tonic—and here's a book like that." She passed her hand caressingly over the note-books as she spoke. "Do you read French?"

"Yes, I passed my boyhood in France."

"Good!" Her whole face brightened, her eyes flashed with pleasure; then in her low, rapid, musical voice, she told me that these note-books, written by her uncle who had died two years before, had only recently been found by her; that, in fact, she had just finished her first reading of them. "And," she continued, "he seems to me living again in them, just as I knew him; sensitive as a woman, yet so strong and manly; and I cannot consent that he shall be buried here in this poor little hut, or that I alone should know him who ought to be known and loved the wide world over. Surely, when he left this record of himself, he did not mean that it should perish, and it shall not. Think of the wretched books that flood the country every year—poor little commonplace, wheezing, asthmatic books, in which their authors moan about the air's stifling them, when it is their own weak lungs that won't work right; books made and read by women who have never lived, only dreamed about living—full of romantic nonsense, or else sickly, hysterical, striving after impassioned expression and only falling into flat lubricity; aphoristic books, made by gathering up all the loose ends of thought in the century; some daring, some absurd, some insane, some only wicked, a few noble; all spewed out in a sort of hodge-podge that smells of Schopenhauer and Petronius Arbiter; inane, feebly splashing books full of descriptions of furniture, clothes and complexions, dull and silly as the woman's page of a daily newspaper. Why shouldn't there issue from the press once in a while a book with a soul, a book that has red blood in its veins and a heart that beats sound and strong? Nobody will read it? People want the

mise en scène, the decorations and all the accessories, and are indifferent about the acting? Not the people who are worth while!—the mob, if you like, yes! But we aren't *all* mob. There are still a few of us who care more about the clear blaze of the fire on the hearth than for the way in which the andirons are molded. I am sure that I am not blinded by my affection. Read that page and tell me whether it does not live."

I read it, and felt as she did, that real life had gone to the making of it.

She questioned me about myself and my pursuits, absorbed evidently in one idea. I was able to answer her inquiries satisfactorily. The book, singularly enough, was written entirely in French. Whether the language had lent itself most readily to the author, or whether he had employed it as a sort of veil to hide even from himself the nudity of his thought, it is impossible to say. At any rate, he used it like a master; and the present English version given to the reader must necessarily lack much of the beautiful, energetic clearness of the original.

"I cannot translate it myself," she continued. "It would break my heart again, as it has done in the reading of it. Besides, my very wish to do it well would make me stumble and halt. Then, too, I do not belong to myself. I have a husband and five children who need me; and this dear one needs me no longer. Could you undertake it, or do you know someone who could do it well?"

In short, I consented to translate the book into English, after consultation with her husband, who confirmed the good opinion of me which the wife had so hastily formed. He is a chemist of note, and a gentleman in every way worthy of her. I stayed a week with them in their beautiful home, at some distance from the little hut in which I first met the wife; and I hope that it is not presumption to say that the friendship there formed will last throughout our lives.

I could not at once undertake the translation, owing

to prior engagements; and it was decided that a careful copy of the original should be sent to me later. After mature consideration, we came to feel that the book had nothing to say in the author's name that was not equally valuable under any other name; and that, as some with whom his life had been most intimately associated were still living, it was altogether best and most fitting that the real names should be suppressed, and fictitious ones substituted for them. It is the sort of semi-obscurity which he himself would have best liked.

Upon the back of each one of the eight note-books which comprise the original manuscript is written "*Le Journal d'un Reclus*"; yet in the strict sense of the word this man was no recluse; on the contrary, his life was rich in contact with that of others; but there was in it that subtle aloofness created by destiny which makes it possible for a human life to flow silently among other lives without contracting their color or taking their course; just as the Gulf Stream threads its blue way through the ocean unchanged by the waters that surround it. It was written without any division into chapters, and I have taken the liberty to subdivide it, for the convenience of the reader.

This book is the story of a wounded heart, searching its cure in solitude and labor; the story of a quick brain capable of thinking for itself; of a strong character that finds the best solution of life's problems in the words, growth, work, and duty; the story of a scholar who finds rich solace in books and study, and judges wisely what he reads.

The mere story of his life may possibly interest a few readers who will not otherwise care for the book, for it is not devoid of incident or romance; but to those who love to sound the great questions of human life—the mission of grief, the aim of culture, the true use of life—the book will speak in the voice of a friend, a rare, new companion whose acquaintance they will be glad to make.

Here was a man who dared to look into the abyss, and who dared to say to the shadows of it: I will live with you, believing that the sunshine will one day penetrate here; a man whose mind rose above all petty short-sighted systems of philosophy, and knew how to accept the unknowable without flattering his self-love by giving fine names to his ignorance. Enlightened by sorrow, he grew wise without asceticism, indulgent without weakness, tender without demanding tenderness in return, broad without losing the limitations of individuality, a philosopher without ceasing to be a man. He knew how to renounce happiness without despising it, and how to find joy in the smile of an infant, or the flight of a bird. His old age was more beautiful and happier than his youth; for his life was a ceaseless growth, and with the fruits of his rich experience, he knew how to enrich others. He began as we all do by asking of life all or nothing, and he finished by understanding what some of us never do, why something is not only better than nothing, but better than all.

In this simple story of his life, told without any attempt to produce a work of art, he has produced a book that will be especially suggestive and valuable to all thoughtful men and women to whose care the education of the young is entrusted. Receiving in his youth an exceptional mental training, endowed by nature with the shrinking, sensitive temperament of the artist, without the artist's creative gift, capable of acute suffering and acute joy, finding himself out of harmony with the requirements of competitive struggle in commercial life, he did not sink into a mere puling sentimental, or harden into a sneering cynic; he found, or rather, made a place for himself, independent and helpful; and worked out a clear, sane view of life, which he expresses in many a terse, wholesome and tonic aphorism.

For this reason, his book is destined to live more than a summer season. It does not glitter with brilliant paradoxes that flatter the surface intelligence and

tickle the senses, without feeding the heart. It is thick-sown with the truths we live by, not the semi-truths by which we amuse ourselves. Its atmosphere is wholly an outdoor one. The wind blows through it: sunlight, not candle-light, shines there; and the air is sweet with the odor of pines and wild flowers.

It will speak in no unmistakable tones to those who suffer, who think, who aspire; for its author missed none of the deep experiences of life. He, too, had to walk in darkness for a season and grope for light. Tears glisten on the pages of his book. It would not be human without them; but it is not *water-soaked*. It preaches no sniveling gospel of despair. It recognizes the beauty and strength of self-possession, and the weakness and slavery of passion. The author does not hug his chains, gild them with illusions, and call them ornaments. He is not transformed by his desires into a monster of colossal egotism who assumes for himself a title of superiority and the right to be a law unto himself. He recognizes the profound moral truth that whoever arrogates to himself the title of super-human, ends by becoming inhuman. His heart is too big, too warm to wish for a moment to break the tie which unites him to his kind.

The style of the book in its original French is easy, rich, and limpid as a mountain stream. The author is not of those who mistake muddiness for depth; nor is he of those who, for want of thought, fall into long and minute descriptions of exteriors. He seizes on essentials; he etches, he does not paint. He writes because he has something to say; and he wishes to be read and understood by those who care more for the picture than for the frame. The whole man in his simplicity and earnestness appears in his book. But we shall let him speak for himself. He knows better how to do it than we.

April 6, 1909.

M. F.

PART I
SUNRISE AND NOON

CHAPTER I

EARLY MEMORIES

April 12, 18—

THERE are days when we seem to be born anew into the pure joy of living, such as children and all healthy young animals feel. The stupidity and weariness that had benumbed our faculties melt away like morning mists, and the sun bursts out warm and brilliant. Curiosity and interest in everything revive. Without knowing it, we go about with a smile on our lips, or break into singing. Life seems once more to need no particular aim, but to be aim and joy in itself. We are glad simply to be alive.

Here I am, alive to the finger-tips on such a day. I shall soon be forty; and I feel as if I were but twenty, with the future still before me, big with hope and promise.

I have just been reading Cellini's autobiography in that familiar, simple old Italian whose strength and suppleness no translation can possibly render. What a superb mixture it is of arrogance and humility, hard common sense and the wildest superstition, ribaldry and poetry, courage and cowardice, coarseness and refinement, tenderness and brutality (I note how beautifully reverent he always is when he speaks of Michelangelo), crime and innocence—in short, the whole gamut of human strength and weakness is there, illuminated by great genius.

Is it immense egotism or an immense generosity that makes a man capable of giving himself so entirely to posterity, even to the innermost folds of his heart? I think I could not do it, were I to suffer a thousand deaths for the omission. That is because I am not

rich enough. I should shrink into a corner, ashamed of my rags and my nakedness; yet I, too, have lived, thought, felt keenly, suffered much—and isn't that the essence of literature? What is wanting to the writers of to-day is that they have not known real difficulties, noble sufferings. Life has been too easy for them. They can't sit on stone benches any more; they must have cushions under them. They don't know the meaning of courage. They whine when they cut their fingers. All their pains are colics—fits of indigestion; their nausea is not of vice, but of surfeiting. If they were capable of believing in God, they would ask nothing of him but an exemption from the evils that attend the excessive gratification of their lusts. The soul! the soul! the soul! that is what we want of you; not your houses, your furniture, your decorations, your diseases, your satieties. What have you done to deserve to walk upright instead of going on all fours? Tell us that!

Cellini opens his biography by saying that all men, no matter their condition, if they have done anything worth while, ought with their own hand to write a description of their life; but ought not to commence doing so until they have passed the age of forty.

And I? Have I done anything worth while, lived to any purpose whatever these forty years? To the wounded, solitude and silence! But the wound no longer bleeds; I can look calmly on the scar which I shall carry to my grave. I can look with gratitude on these long days and long nights in the heart of a wood whose silence has been at times an impassioned eloquence to me. A great sorrow or a great disillusionment sets us apart, creates a solitude about us, even in the market-place. The hum of voices seems to come to us from afar, and from away below us. It is as if we were lifted on high, where the only real life there is, is concentrated in our throbbing veins and centered in the tumult of our thoughts. Fortunate are those who have not been numbed and chilled in this solitude, but can find articulate speech for grief, translat-

ing it into music, poetry, or the vivifying strength of a great thought or noble deed.

Noble, encouraging lines these of Goethe:

“Was ich irrte, was ich strebte,
Was ich litt und was ich lebte
Sind hier Blumen nur im Strauss;
Und das Alter wie die Jugend,
Und der Fehler wie die Tugend
Nimmt sich gut in Liedern aus.”

Ah, if I, too, could gather my errors, my struggles, my sufferings into such a *Blumenstrauß*, what would I not give? There are times when I have suffered intensely from wanting the power of expression. There is a poet in me who has never found his wings, never possessed the magnificent power of transforming his griefs into song, else there is not a tear I have shed but should glitter in verse, not a sigh I have breathed but should make music in prose.

Something makes me feel to-day that though blasted at top, like some old oak of the forest, the roots of me live yet, and could send their sap up into living branches capable of bearing fruit. Who knows? Let me look myself squarely in the face from the pages of this little note-book; let me recall the past once more, to be done with its sorrow forever; or rather, to be sure that I have digested its pain into the red blood of courage and power.

My father, George Graham, whose name and whose physical vigor I have inherited, was the head gardener of a Scottish nobleman whose estate lay among the Braid Hills near Edinburgh. From one of its heights we could overlook the city; and with a slight change of names I might sing with Walter Scott:

“Blackford! on whose uncultured breast,
Among the broom, and thorn, and whin,
A truant boy, I sought the nest,
Or listed, as I lay at rest,

While rose, on breezes thin,
The murmur of the city crowd,
And, from his steeple jangling loud,
Saint Giles's mingling din."

How I love her! this Auld Reekie, with her proud outlook on the water, her old castle perched on a granite cliff and seeming to grow out of it as naturally as some stunted pine among the rocks; her narrow crooked streets and long lines of gray houses pressed close together; her monuments and old palace, eloquent of the life of the past! How often I have rambled about her streets a dreaming boy, fancying myself some knight or chevalier ready to do battle for my country, or to die for the cause of Mary, Queen of Scots. I remember how I envied the young Douglas who rowed her across Lochleven, dropping the keys of the castle into the lake;—and would have eagerly bartered my life and lain dust and ashes in his place, to have had his privilege to look at her beautiful face.

It is a great thing for an imaginative child to be born in a town with memories like Edinburgh. He feels himself as it were legitimated—the atmosphere of poetry nourishes him; and his poverty sits light on him, if he be poor; for is he not rich in historical reminiscences?

The house in which my father lived with his family was a very pretty little lodge at the entrance of the park, in the midst of which was the castle of his master. I still remember with delight the picturesque beauty of this house made of rough, brownish-gray stone, but almost entirely concealed by vines and climbing roses; and the odor of sweet briar or of the honeysuckle exhaled at night-fall gives me even now a singularly desolate feeling of homesickness by recalling this pretty nest of ours.

My father was a man of very unequal humor, otherwise a really superior man, loving a good book better than the idle chatter of an empty head. This taste un-

doubtedly preserved him from drink, the besetting weakness of many men of his station, and kept him at home. There were days when he was altogether charming, showing without egotism his singular good sense, quick wit, and sincere cordiality. Unfortunately, these days were not frequent; there were many more of them when he was taciturn, easily fretted, and even savagely morose. We children had a habit of saying to mother when we had not yet seen him in the morning, and she came to call us, or help one of us dress, "Is the sun shining?" If she said, "Ah, no, my children, it is very cloudy to-day!" we kept out of his way as much as possible, talked in whispers, and played no noisy games within his hearing.

I believe that my mother, who was patience and kindness itself, was not very happy with him. She was gentle and forgiving; but she could not always forget, on the days of his kindness, the cruel words with which he had hurt her in ill humor. I never in my life heard him beg her pardon; but when he had been very sarcastic, he used to show his repentance by gathering the choicest flowers and laying them in her lap, or at her plate; or he would bring her some choice fruit and insist upon her eating it. Sometimes, though very rarely, he would stoop and kiss her. He was much taller than she, with strong black hair, a swarthy skin, and dark eyes that glowed like live coals when he was angry. She was blonde, blue-eyed, and plump, a little below the medium height, naturally the sweetest tempered, most tranquil of women; but, in his presence, she always seemed anxious and nervous. She was wholly uneducated, so far as books are concerned; but she supplied this lack by natural shrewdness, a great deal of practical ability, so that her very fingers seemed to think, and a simplicity and natural grace full of charm. She would have answered exactly Molière's idea of what a woman should be. She had been very pretty as a girl. I have a small colored sketch of her that

would pass for a copy of a head by Greuze; and in growing stouter with advancing years, if she lost much of that early infantile freshness, she gained by a sweet air of maternity and goodness that attracted the confidence and affection of all who saw her.

She was the mother of nine children, of whom I was the third child and the first boy. My father had some theories of his own about education, which he determined to carry out with his children. Undoubtedly, he himself had often been tormented by tastes and ambitions out of harmony with his station; and he had resolved that none of his children should suffer in a like manner. He thought the great majority of men incapable of self-government, and cited the horrors of the French Revolution to prove it. He had, therefore, a profound distrust of all theories of social improvement, as a result of what is called the education of the masses, because he thought them incapable of assimilating an education. Of course, he could not help admitting that there were exceptional cases scattered among them: Burns and Ferguson had taught him that; but such men in receiving the gift of genius had also received the power to educate themselves, under any circumstances; and with what fire he quoted Burns to prove it:

“ What’s a’ your jargon o’ your schools.
Your Latin names for horns an’ stools;
If honest nature made you fools,
What sairs your grammars?
Ye’d better ta’en up spades and shools,
Or knappin-hammers.

“ A set o’ dull, conceited hashes,
Confuse their brains in college classes!
They gang in stirks, and come out asses,
Plain truth to speak;
An’ syne they think to climb Parnassus
By dint o’ Greek!

“ Gie me a spark o’ nature’s fire.
That’s a’ the learning I desire;
Then though I drudge thro’ dub and mire
At pleugh or cart,
My muse, though hamely in attire,
May touch the heart.”

He was a Tory by conviction, and not by inherited opinions; and so far above feeling class envy that he used to declare that no greater misfortune could overtake the human race than their arrival at a stage of perfect natural equality; and that all social and individual progress, all charm in the variety of human types and conditions of life, all the higher feelings of sympathy, reverence, affection, depend on this very inequality which exists among men. “ Who will build your houses, dig your sewers, pave your streets, till your fields, on the day when you are all artists and poets? ” he would say; and again, “ It is a great misfortune for a man never to have known a superior. I would rather look up than stoop continually. I would rather admire than despise.” In which views, I think he was altogether right.

As for his children, he wished to give them the strength of body and mind that comes from perfect physical health, and the freedom and independence that come from the privation of all luxuries. “ Cleanliness,” he used to say, “ is the luxury of the poor. I want no one to outstrip you in that.”

Our food, therefore, was always abundant enough and varied enough, within the necessary limits; but it was always very simple; however, as we brought a healthy appetite to it, we ate it with a relish that few children at present know anything about. We had meat twice a week, good creamy milk for our porridge, and a wholesome rye bread which my mother made to perfection. We had a few chickens and they

furnished us with eggs, and a little garden which supplied us with the ordinary vegetables. But we had neither candy, chewing-gum, cakes, nor imported fruits, and I was ten years old before I had ever tasted anything but home-made sweets. At New Year's and Christmas, mother made us a big pan of taffy, which, carefully hoarded, sometimes lasted three weeks. But, taffy at any other time would have seemed to us all only one of the sublime impossibilities of fairy-tales. Neither did we ever own such a thing as an artificial toy. My sisters' dolls were ingeniously fashioned out of a bit of wood which my father whittled into the rude semblance of a doll, burning eyes, nose, and mouth into the face with a red-hot poker. A long straight stick was my hobby-horse, and I pranced about, astride it, rearing, kicking, running, jumping with it, and getting a hundred times more exercise, and more varied at that, than if it had been the finest of painted rocking-horses. I am inclined to think that the exercise of the imagination in a child's play gives a keener zest to it when he is left in this way to find his own playthings and invent his own games. Left to ourselves we were never at a loss for amusement; a pretty pebble in the pathway, an early flower, a brightly colored leaf, a curved bit of bark to sail on a stream, made us rich for hours. My oldest sister, four years my senior, was the leader and promoter of most of our games; her quick fancy invested every thing about her with life; and she had a really wonderful way of making us share her imaginative gift. There were certain trees in the park we used to visit gravely; talk with them, and converse about them, as if they were human beings. She invented names for them, entertained us with their extraordinary adventures; and we were sad for a week when the lightning struck one of

them, shivering its top. We spoke of it as a death in the family. Poor girl! with all that surplus sense of life to enrich her own personality, she was not destined to be happy. She married at twenty, against my father's will, a young artist who was fascinated by her beauty. She had inherited her mother's fair skin and yellow hair, and the dark, luminous eyes of her father. She had one child, a daughter; was never strong afterwards, and her husband grew indifferent to her. There may have been faults on her side; she was quick-tempered, imaginative, morbidly sensitive, and capable of suffering out of all proportion to the cause, which would make her difficult to live with intimately. Although her education, in accordance with my father's ideas, had been wholly domestic, like that of the rest of my sisters, in learning to read she had received the key to a wider culture; and her language, in its simplicity and correctness, would not have put her to shame in any station.

Just as my sisters were destined to be good housewives, my brothers and I were all to be brought up to some useful trade. It never entered my father's head to make a scholar of one of us—we might follow anything that nature inclined us to; but we were to live by our hands, not by our wits; and we were to be subjected from infancy to a hardening process that was intended to make us full of courage, self-reliant, and resourceful. We were put to bed in the dark; we slept in a room without fire; we bathed in cold water; and as we had never known anything else, we no more dreamed of asking for indulgence in these directions than of asking for the moon to play with. But we none of us escaped some particular discipline that burned itself painfully into the memory. For my own part, I still remember, with something like self-pity, a very

cruel ordeal that fell to my lot. It happened when I was a mere baby, hardly four years old. It was a beautiful day in early summer. My father wanted my mother to help him with some work in the meadows at some distance from the house; a work in which the two older children could also assist, and they were to be taken along. I had fallen asleep, and though my mother wished to awaken me, to take me with her, my father would not consent to it, saying that I would only be in the way and that I was quite old enough now to be left alone; besides, I was really more of a girl about tagging after my mother's heels than either of my two sisters, and it was high time that I was weaned. Nothing more was necessary than to lock the doors and windows, so that if I awoke, I shouldn't be able to get out and wander away; and that if I cried, it would be good for my lungs. It was, probably, one of my father's cloudy days; and my mother knew him too well to try to persuade him to the contrary; so taking her baby in her arms she left me with a heavy heart and full of fears. Her anxiety wasn't groundless. I had fallen asleep on the floor, and woke duly, looking tranquilly about me, probably expecting soon to see my mother's sweet, kind face bend over me with a smile. All at once, I heard a strange buzzing sound, that quickened the beating of my heart and filled me with fear. I uttered a slight cry, expecting to see some one appear at once; but nothing broke the dead silence but the monotonous ticking of the clock, and this strange buzzing sound that grew louder and louder. Then I saw a large, hideous insect circling above my head, and my alarm changed to the most cruel terror. I rose with a loud scream and rushed into the kitchen to seek refuge in my mother's arms. The room was empty. I called aloud "Mother! Mother!" I ran

from room to room, the insect pursuing me. The unwonted solitude of the house, this frightful insect, the immense terror that overwhelmed me, threw me into convulsions. The minutes grew hours. How long this lasted, I cannot tell; but when at last the family came back at noon, I was almost demented. My mother cried and folded me in her arms; my father took me from her, and bathing my face in cold water, at last succeeded in getting from me an explanation of the cause of my terror. No sooner did he understand, than setting me on the floor, he burst into a loud laugh. Chasing the insect towards the window-pane, he told me that it was a wasp, and putting a towel into my hand, bade me try to kill it. Exhausted by terror, trembling like a leaf, conscious that I could not do it, I burst into tears and refused to try. Disobedience was not a fault in my father's eyes, it was a crime. He whipped me soundly, and wrapping the towel about my baby hand, seized my arm and dashed it against the wasp on the window-pane with such violence that he broke the glass. Whether he killed the wasp or not, I never knew. My mother, white as a sheet, rushed forward, and picking me up in her arms, uttered the only reproach to him I ever heard pass her lips; but it was a furious one. "You brute!" she cried, "you do not deserve to have a child!"

He did not answer, but white as herself, passed out of the room.

When he came back at night he was entirely himself again, for there was always something generous in his anger; it spent itself all at once—there was nothing slow or sullen in his nature, he couldn't sulk—the sky cleared at once, as soon as the storm was over. He talked cheerfully to us all, never made the slightest allusion to what had happened, but just before it was

time for us children to go to bed, he took me on his lap, and drawing from his pocket a small book, he began to show me the pictures in it, telling me that he had bought it for me, and that I must learn my letters, so that I could read it some day. It was a child's book about animals, profusely illustrated, and simply written. I was too much of a child, too healthy to feel resentment, and family affections are very strong in simple and uncorrupted natures. I did not love my father the less for his austerities, perhaps I loved him the more for them, not being able to imagine that a father could act otherwise. I have spoken of my mother's sharp reproof drawn from her in a moment of maternal agony, but that was quite exceptional. In caressing her children after some mistaken harshness on his part, she took great pains to efface that view of it, and never criticized him, or allowed us to complain. She was his interpreter to us, explaining that he hated cowardice, lying, shirking, and neglect of duty as he ought to hate them, and as he meant that we should hate them too. That he was quite successful at least in making us hate and fear the consequences of weakness, I can attest by another experience which occurred about a year and a half later.

My father was a great smoker, and had the bad habit of smoking, at times, in bed. I think he would have quite frankly admitted that it was a very bad habit and a very selfish one, and then would have justified it on the score that perfection is no part of man's inheritance or possible acquisition on earth; and that if he didn't smoke in bed sometimes, he would probably do worse.

One night, when for some reason or other my spelling lesson had been neglected during the day, he called me to him in bed, and I lay on his arm spelling for him, while he smoked. It was a warm night, and my gown was unbuttoned at the neck, exposing my shoulders and chest. Finding that his pipe interfered with

the lesson, he took it from his mouth to put it on the washstand, near the head of the bed. In doing so, it turned in his hand, so that the burning ashes fell on my bare shoulder. He did not notice the mishap, and though I winced involuntarily at the first touch, I lay perfectly still afterwards, not daring even to brush the ashes from my smarting skin, but heroically spelled away till, yawning, he declared himself satisfied and bade me run off to bed. I never told anyone how badly I had been burnt, but there is a dotted white scar on my shoulder that will tell the story till I, too, am dust and ashes.

So much for our moral discipline, consisting not so much of precept as of example; for though my father diligently read his Bible, and rarely discussed its teachings, he left to my mother the care of instilling what is commonly known as religious principles into us. Like a man who had thought out the subject for himself, he had come to the conclusion that as the ordinary man dislikes nothing so much as uncertainty, and, like a child, is satisfied with any reply to his questions, so long as it dogmatically affirms that it *is* a reply, the name of religion covers a multitude of guesses and reveries. He himself was satisfied with saying, "I do not know"—and to those who feel it necessary to say "*I do* know," he would have recommended any form of Protestantism as the most suitable guide to moral living. But he had a supreme contempt for the manner in which the majority of believers interpret and follow their guide; and I once heard him define a Christian as a man who pretended to believe in Christ, but refused to imitate him; and a skeptic, as a man who doubted Christ's divine origin, but believed in his teachings with regard to the relation of man to man, and tried to follow them.

He gave, therefore, a tacit recognition to the rules of Christianity, and I was a grown young man before I positively knew his convictions. I am the only one

of his children who ever suspected them. I think my mother knew that he was not orthodox, but she never said anything about it. As for herself, she had the simplicity of faith of a little child. Never the shadow of a doubt darkened her sweet, gentle spirit. She was of those born to conviction. Her loving and faithful heart needed an infinite and permanent love in which to find the rest denied it here; in which characteristic she was wholly woman.

I was a grown young man before my father spoke frankly to me about his opinions, and I was the only one of his children to whom he did so speak. I was also the only one of them who received a liberal education, and that happened quite contrary to his will. He wished to teach us how to read and write and calculate so far as the needs of practical life require knowledge. He taught us the names of trees and plants, and their virtues; the common minerals, and a practical sort of elementary chemistry, sufficient to allow us to draw all the possible advantages from the soil. If curiosity or a desire to know more, impelled us, well and good—we were properly started; we might go on as fast or as slowly as we pleased. If not, we were amply equipped with a skilled trade at our fingers' ends to make our way respectably through life, without being troubled by visions and setting up for reformers. My brothers have proved the wisdom of his ideas by becoming respectable and independent artisans; and I, who received the best education attainable in my youth, have found, if not the happiest, at least the most useful and most tranquil days of my life in following my father's pursuits. How my education happened to take another bent was owing to a singular circumstance.

CHAPTER II

A HAPPY ACCIDENT

THE nobleman in whose service my father passed his life, had an only son who was about two months my senior. Unfortunately, he was born with a spinal malady which threatened to deform him, and made him suffer cruelly at times. All that medical and surgical skill could do to relieve his sufferings had been done; but he was unable to walk, and had to be wheeled about in an invalid's chair. But, as if nature had wished to recompense him for her injuries, he was gifted with a mind marvelously quick in receiving impressions, and tenacious in holding them; and, though his poor little body was twisted, his face was one of remarkable beauty, with its large, dark eyes, broad, full forehead, and sensitive mouth. I shall never forget the first time that I saw this beautiful head quite near me. It was a fine afternoon in May. I have shared with my older sister a certain vivacity of imagination more easily exercised in solitude than in company, to which I probably owe a strong inclination for rambling about in woods and solitary places. I had been sauntering this day along the edge of a stream which had cut its way at the foot of a steep, wooded hill. Having followed its course some distance, I climbed the hill at its steepest point, where the wood was thickest. There, in a small, open space, looking down on the ravine, I threw myself on my back among the grass and wild flowers, with my hands interlaced beneath my head, and my eyes fixed on the bit of blue sky above me. I was in the midst of one of those delightful reveries which only lovers and fanciful children know, when I suddenly

heard the murmur of voices and the sound of approaching steps. I rose with a bound, and ran to hide myself in a thick clump of bushes near by, in order to wait the departure of my unwelcome intruders. From my place of concealment, I could see very well without being seen. To my great surprise, the intruders were a young woman in the dress of an attendant nurse, or governess, and two children; one, a girl of eleven or twelve; the other, a boy of my own age, that is to say, nine, seated in a wheeled chair.

"Oh," cried the girl, jumping up and down and clapping her hands with pleasure, "this is the very place we were looking for, isn't it? Let's set down here on the grass, and you can finish the story. Don't you like it, Eliot?" She ran to the chair, leaning over it affectionately; and the boy smiling up at her, answered that he liked it, too.

"Very well," answered the nurse, ceasing to wheel the chair. "It is very pretty here, and cool, too. What did you do with the book, Lady Margaret?"

"I put it into the chair."

The nurse began searching for the book, but could not find it.

"No, it isn't here. Are you very sure that you put it into the chair?"

"Yes. I slipped it in at the side, when we stopped to pick the hare-bells."

"Then it must have fallen out. I'll go back and see if I can find it. Do you think you can amuse yourselves here a little while, till I come back? I won't be long."

With that, she hastened away. I lay perfectly motionless, almost afraid to breathe, lest I should betray my presence, but fascinated by the extreme beauty of the children and the natural grace of the young girl. She was dressed in white with a sash of blue ribbon; and shoulder knots of the same color looped up her short sleeves.

Of course, I knew at once that they were the children of Lord L——; as I had seen them at times at chapel service and riding out at the gate of the lodge; but the cleft that social distinctions had created between us was so great that it had removed them in my fancy so far above me that I never thought of them as children, with the natural weaknesses and desires of children; but as some sort of superior creatures to whom I should look up with reverence, but never presume to think of as associates. My father had taken great pains to instil this reverence into his children. He, himself, was fully persuaded that however much the nobility had degenerated, in individual cases through shameful misalliances, it had its foundation originally in a natural superiority of mental and physical force—qualities that imply leadership, and ought to imply the willing obedience of inferior classes.

In the presence of this beauty and joyous grace, it was not difficult for me, a shy, awkward, imaginative boy, to feel the difference between these children and myself; and to my fascinated eyes, the little girl recalled the image of the angels of whom my mother delighted to speak in recounting the joys of paradise.

Apparently, the governess could not readily find the book which she had gone in search of, and the children began to tire of doing nothing. The young girl began to pick up pebbles from the bare stony incline of the hill-side, and returning to the summit, amused herself with trying to throw them into the stream—she wasn't often successful; but when the stone fell into the stream with a splash, she laughed and shouted with glee. The boy wished to share in the sport, and begged her to wheel his chair nearer the edge, and to give him some stones, also. She gathered up a handful of pebbles, and rolled his chair dangerously near the incline. He found the game amusing, and showed a natural dexterity in hitting certain trees at which he aimed; for when he found that he had not sufficient

strength to hurl the stone into the stream, or, perhaps, lacked a sufficiently good position from which to hurl it, he desisted from the attempt, and declared it was more fun to play that he was shooting game; and he selected certain trees that he called deer, at which he aimed. Soon he had thrown all the stones which she had gathered, and begged her to go farther down the hill and bring him up a quantity of larger ones. She started off at once, but seeing some beautiful flowers growing along the edge of the stream, she went farther than she had intended at first. The boy grew impatient at her delay. Leaning far forward in a sudden effort to look down into the ravine, he set the chair in motion. I saw the peril in a moment, and, quick as a flash, I darted from the bush and threw myself headlong before the chair, stopping its course with my body just as it was about to make a rapid and dangerous descent into the stream, which at that point was deep enough to drown him.

He hadn't uttered a cry, although he must have seen his danger; but, in falling, I had pierced the fleshy part of my hand with a long thorn, and the blood that ran from the wound caught his eye. Then he commenced to call for help with all his might. His sister, dropping her flowers, began to run, crying, towards us, slipping and falling on the way; but before she could reach us the governess appeared, and rescued us without more ado. She was pale with terror, blamed herself for having left them, overwhelmed me with expressions of gratitude, asked my name, and called me a little hero. Seeing my wounded hand, she closed her eyes a moment, then opening them, resolutely drew the thorn from my hand, and bound her handkerchief about the wound.

The young girl turned towards me with tears in her eyes, saying simply: "How good and brave you are." The boy alone said nothing; but he put out his hand, and catching hold of mine, pressed it firmly. All three

wished to go with me to the lodge to see my hand properly dressed, but confused, trembling like an aspen, I begged to be allowed to go alone, and darted away through the woods like some wild thing, and was soon out of their sight or hearing. But I was in no hurry to get home. Intimate joys like intimate griefs refuse companionship, and I was inexpressibly happy. I had saved a human life, and was born anew into my first complete consciousness of individuality. Up to this time I had existed as a chaos of romantic fancies, never once accepting myself for what I really was—the eldest son of a poor peasant, destined to follow his footsteps and till the soil in my turn. Sometimes, as I have already said, I was a knight-errant, wandering from country to country, a miniature Don Quixote, righting wrongs and covering myself with glory. Sometimes, I was only a humble missionary, carrying light into darkest Africa, preaching to black cannibals a religion of love. But to-day, I was just myself—a little boy nine years old, who had rendered a great service to his master, and felt that there was nothing sweeter in life than just to serve.

My exaltation prevented me from feeling the slightest pain in my hand; but it did not prevent a sub-consciousness of my surroundings which stamped them so vividly on my memory that I seem to-day to feel the hallowed hush of that beautiful May day in the woods; to see the irregular wavering patches of sunlight, filtered through the tree-tops, lighting up the moss on their trunks; to hear the dry dead twigs crackle under my feet, the whirr of a bird's wing darting across my path; and to smell the earthy odor of the damp woods and moldering leaves.

Up to this time my affections, solid and tranquil, had been limited entirely to my family, and were rather of the nature of habits than passions; but to-day, my childish heart swelled with passionate delight in another, in this young master whose dark eyes had looked

gratefully into mine, whose small fingers had clasped my hand so fervently. I envied the woman who wheeled his chair, the sister whose privilege it was to amuse him; I regretted that I had not hurt myself more seriously in his service. I longed to make myself worthy of his regard.

As for his sister, although I had remarked her beauty, I was as much troubled as charmed by it; I felt myself so much beneath her, that it seemed an audacity to wish to see her again. How coarse and common I must seem to her!—but he, he was a boy; he would understand me, he might even learn to like to have me about him!

When I reached home, I was so full of my new happiness and at the same time rendered so timid by the excess of my emotions, that I dared not speak of my adventure; but to my mother's enquiries about my sore hand I replied that I had fallen on the hill and hurt it with a thorn. I had taken care to remove the handkerchief and hide it in my pocket to avoid having to give an account of it.

She washed the wound and sucked it, fearing poison; then carefully bound it up, telling me I was a good boy not to cry and make a great fuss about it.

But my secret, my beautiful secret, was not destined to remain unknown. We were all at supper on the evening of the same day, when a servant of Lord L—— announced his master's arrival at the Lodge.

Lord L—— was a tall, square-shouldered, handsome man, with a leonine head and a haughty expression that inspired respect and fear. Seeing him enter the room, I felt myself turn scarlet, and my heart beat so violently that it seemed to me it must force its way through my chest.

“Good-evening, Graham,” he said to my father, who rose instantly from his chair, as did the rest of us. “I have come to see one of your boys; the one who showed to-day that he can think and act at the right

time, and hasn't a cowardly drop of blood in his veins. Ah, there he is!" he continued, catching sight of my blushing face and hanging head. "See, he has his hand bound up. Come here, my boy. He told you what he did, didn't he?"

My father looked from his master to me with great surprise, and answered:

"Not a word, my lord!"

"And you, Madame?" he said, turning to my mother.

Troubled and trembling almost as much as I, she replied:

"My lord, he told me that he had fallen and hurt his hand with a thorn, that is all."

His lordship put his hand on my head, and a smile lighted his face, lending to it an expression of rare sweetness.

"Then it is my great pleasure to tell you that he saved the life of my son to-day; if not at the risk of his own, at any rate at the risk of seriously injuring himself. I am very glad that he escaped with a slight wound and a few bruises."

"My lord, he did nothing but his duty and obeyed a natural instinct," said my father.

"A boy who has such instincts and can obey them so effectively can make a man worth the name."

"Thank you, my lord, I hope so," answered my father with a respectful courtesy.

"But we must help a little at that. I know your ideas about education, Graham, and I approve of them. We plow the ground when we know that it is fertile enough to repay us for our labor; but if we should discover a gold mine in the same piece of ground, we should stop making a wheat-field of it. We should sink shafts, bring machines, and prepare for getting out the ore. I want to see what I can get out of this boy of yours, by giving him the same educational advantages that my son will receive. You will consent to that, I feel sure."

"My lord," stammered my father, reddening to the roots of his hair, "he is yours to do what you will with him; but I fear you do us too much honor, and if you should be mistaken,—if there should be no gold in him——"

"Then we'll stop mining," interrupted his lordship with a smile, "go back to plowing, and we shall have some wheat. May I speak to you alone, concerning my plans?"

He turned towards the door and my father followed him into the yard.

My mother said nothing; but, folding her arms about me, kissed me passionately and burst into tears. Whether they were tears of joy and pride, or whether they marked a sudden presentiment of misfortune in this new destiny that was so widely different from that of my brothers and sisters, I do not know.

As for myself, I was far from being either happy or proud. My boyish love of freedom was stronger than ambition. I did not dream that I was to be educated along with his son, but that certain difficult tasks were to be required of me, which I was not sure I could perform. It seemed to me that I was going to cease to belong to myself; for, once engaged in my task, I felt I must do it, if I killed myself at it, rather than disappoint his lordship's expectations of me.

I waited with extreme impatience the return of my father. My mother was not less anxious.

"Well?" she said at my father's return.

I had never seen his face so grave.

He did not reply to her, but advancing towards me, he said:

"George, I have just heard what you did, and you did well, but it is not worth speaking of further, and you were right to keep still about it. You heard what Lord L—— has promised you. He speaks of giving you *advantages*, and we have not the right to refuse them. Now, it remains for you to prove that in edu-

cating you, he really *does* give you advantages. In future, you are to live two lives. For a few hours each day you will live at the castle, where you are to take your lessons with his son. You will see what it is to be rich and noble; but for the rest of the day you will live at home, where you will continue to see what it is to be a peasant's son. Now, my boy, if the day ever comes when you curse in your heart the station in which you were born and lust after one above you; when you blush to call me father and secretly spurn your mother, that day, I shall wish that you had never been born; for that day you will prove that his lordship was polishing brass and not gold. But if you have good sense, if you can keep your head level, no matter how high you may climb, if you can remember your origin without false shame, if you can keep your heart clean as well as your hands, if your education can make you flexible without being fastidious; if, like a cat, you can fall on your feet whenever you fall, then you are saved. The greatest misfortune that can happen to a man is not to be neglected, but to be valued for more than he is worth. Neglected, he is forced to play no part, for he has no reputation to keep up; but lauded for something which he isn't, he is continually obliged to hide his weaknesses, to assume virtues which he hasn't, and lives in a perpetual state of fear and deceit. I'd rather be the lowest beggar than a mean man set up in a high place."

I was too young to understand, perfectly, the drift of what my father said, namely, that education quite as often unfits a man for the duties of life as fits him for them; but I felt keenly that he distrusted my power to learn, and I secretly resolved that he should not be disappointed in me. Besides, the fact that I was to see the young lord every day, and study with him, put an entirely new face on the matter. It seemed to me that I could not help but learn, just to fit myself to be near him.

CHAPTER III

A TUTOR OF THE OLD REGIME

THE next morning at nine o'clock I accompanied my father to the castle. Both of us were dressed in our best; and we walked in silence, hand in hand. I think my father himself was nervous; but as for me, the most absolute despair and terror had succeeded all my pretty dreams, and I would have given anything in the world to have obliterated my glorious yesterday, and to be running barefoot in the dewy grass untroubled by the least notice of me. A thick mist covered my eyes, and my throat swelled with the pain of unshed tears. All at once my father said:

"Do you remember very well what I said to you last night, George?"

"Yes, sir."

"There is something else I want to say to you. I said you were going to live two lives. Every morning you are to start to the castle with your Sunday clothes on, and your brothers will be wearing their patched trousers and going barefoot. They are not to share your studies, and when their faces and hands will be sunburnt, yours will be white. But for a time, at least, you will come home every noon. The young lord's health will not allow him to study more than a few hours in the morning. When you come home I want you to take off your clothes at once, put on the old ones, and if no task is given you to do at home, you are to help me as usual—you have shown me that you can keep a quiet tongue in your head—now keep on holding it. Don't undertake to make your brothers discontented about what you see and hear and learn. I don't want the whole household to be interested in your experiences at the castle—that concerns you, alone.

If you find that you are not equal to this opportunity, don't go on pretending to be. Tell me frankly at once, and I'll see that you are set free."

"Would you rather have me give it up, father?"

He sighed, he was silent a moment, and then said with an effort, squeezing my small hand tightly in his big one:

"No, George, I should be proud if my son could show that he had a good head, could take a gentleman's education and be a gentleman, not a conceited upstart. Will you promise me to try to do your best?"

"Yes, father, I promise you that I will work with all my might."

"Come on, then. Courage, lad!" He was looking down at me, and for the first time noticed my extreme timidity and pain, and his face brightened a little. "Good! you are not foolhardy, at least—you know it isn't going to be as easy as it looks, don't you?—but see here! if down in my heart I didn't believe you capable, I should be ashamed to be leading you up here to put you to the test."

He quickened his pace, and soon we were before the castle. Never had it appeared so colossal, nor I so little and insignificant. It was a large, somber-looking building of dark gray stone, which looked as if it might have been the work of giants, and destined to last as long as the soil on which it stood. It was built on the summit of a broad, rounded hill, and was surrounded by magnificent oaks and plane trees, which at this hour threw their lengthened shadows towards the west.

On entering the castle we were shown up a broad marble stairway which led to a long corridor at the end of which was the class-room. It was a very large room, admirably lighted and aired by six large French windows; three of them looking to the south, and three to the east. The morning sunlight gave it a cheerful air, which the scanty furniture, extremely plain and limited to what was necessary, would hardly have done. The

walls, delicately tinted with a bluish green, had no ornaments beyond maps of various kinds, some well-filled bookshelves and a huge fireplace in which some logs were burning brightly.

Four little tables, covered with books, pens, and other articles of study, occupied the center of the room, before three of which stood an upright chair. The fourth table was much lower and peculiarly shaped to fit about a reclining chair.

We found no one in the room but the tutor, a man probably thirty or thirty-five years old, somewhat below medium height, slender, active, seeming to sparkle with life. There wasn't the slightest air of the pedagogue about him, and so much of natural kindness in his bearing and in the expression of his face, that he inspired me at once with a feeling of confidence and affection.

He rose from one of the tables as soon as we were shown in, and advanced towards us with an outstretched hand.

"Mr. Graham, I am very glad to see you and your son, and I hope we shall soon be good friends." He took my hand, pressing it affectionately and smiling kindly at me. My fear vanished in a moment. I was sure that we should be friends. I looked at my father: his face, too, had lighted up.

"You know how to read, of course," he continued in his singularly pleasant voice.

"Yes, sir, a little," I answered.

"And what have you read?"

"I have read 'The Pilgrim's Progress,' and 'Robinson Crusoe,' and a little of the Bible, and some of 'Plutarch's Lives.'"

"Good! That's a boy's best library. You have commenced well; and I dare say you'd be a great deal happier to-day to be thrown on some desert island than to come here to begin the life of a student, eh?" and he patted my cheek.

"Yes, sir," I replied in all seriousness.

He smiled, and pointing to one of the tables, told me that it was mine, bidding me sit down by it. Then he put a volume of Greek Mythology into my hands, told me to read about the wanderings of Ceres in search of Proserpine, and said he would ask me to tell him about it when I had finished.

I buried myself in the book, while he spoke in a low voice to my father. When I raised my head, at the end of my reading, I was alone with him. He seemed pleased with my way of telling the story; and when, in recounting the experience of Ceres in nursing Triptolemus back to health, I called the mother foolish in her fears, he interrupted me eagerly to say:

"How right you are. She was a foolish mother, wasn't she? She thought it possible for her boy to grow strong and fine without ever knowing any pain and hardship. That can't be, you know. I am glad you noticed that. Well, go on."

He let me tell the story in my own way without wishing to put his own words into my mouth, and listened as attentively, and with as much apparent interest as if he were hearing it for the first time.

I remember this as a marked characteristic of his manner with his pupils—he was never languid, never pedantic; the schoolmaster never absorbed the man in him. He was never our inflexible master, he was our companion, keenly interested in whatever we were doing, and seeming himself to be learning it with us and sharing with us the enthusiasm and delight of conscious growth. He had so admirably digested his learning that it was conspicuous nowhere. I have since seen men of erudition whose learning has absorbed all their vitality, so that they seem no longer human, but to be leather-bound books with legs and a dreary voice. Perhaps there is nothing crueler in the experience of the young in their exuberant freshness, than to be brought into contact with these hidebound creatures.

What scorn they feel and rightly feel for knowledge mummified into the rigidity of uselessness. How superior they feel in their power to laugh, to joke, to run like deer, to feel, to think, to talk in their own wild, free way. They are alive. He is dead and unfortunately for them, not buried yet. He cannot train minds, he can only cram them; and cramming leads to mental indigestion, to the stifling of the soul under a pressure of matter.

But, if no greater misfortune can happen to the young than to be crammed by a pedant, or neglected by an ignoramus; on the other hand, no greater good fortune can befall them, than to come under the care of a really well-trained mind, a beautiful, broad, elastic nature. Such a man was our tutor, Richard Glenn. He was so human, in the largest sense of the word. He could speak with equal ease and intelligence to a peasant, a lord, a child, or a woman, and that without offensive condescension or affected elevation. He seemed to be a man of universal experience, and to understand you intuitively. He had within him a great fund of warm affection, which never degenerated either into weakness or into sentimentality. We adored him, but at the same time we deeply respected him. I do not know how he made us feel that in spite of all his kindness and his affection for us, he had an iron will which we could neither melt by our tears and entreaties, nor bend by sulking or persistence. His "no" and his "yes" were final, and we liked them to be so, and felt that he was just.

He had, too, that rare preservative against pedantry, a keen sense of humor. He never took exaggerated views of things, but kept the sane level of common sense. We hear a great deal about methods of teaching in educational circles. If you had asked him what his method was, he would have answered, with reason, that he had none. He taught in a hundred ways, as the need or the occasion required. Sometimes, the big study-hall rang with our mirth, and we were learning

and laughing at the same time; and if the laugh threatened to get the upper hand, he knew how to lead us back to our tasks with a beautiful seriousness that never missed its aim. There were times when he seemed not one man, but twenty. He had a remarkable power of mimicry, and a dramatic gift rarely seen off the stage. His reading of the great poets was something unforgettable; and in memory of it, I think that if I were asked to name the most valuable natural gift of a great teacher, I should say it was the power to read well. I say *natural* gift advisedly, for I do not at all mean what is called *eloquence*. No one can be taught to read well; it is as much a gift born with one as the gift for music, painting, and poetry; and *eloquence* no more resembles it than a powder puff covered with rouge resembles the healthy cheek of youth, glowing with living color. It takes heart and brain to read well; it only takes a little parrot-like capacity for imitating to make an elocutionist.

I have seen Richard Glenn's face pale and flush as he read, and his eyes fill with tears; I have heard his voice tremble with genuine feeling; and we, too, trembled as we listened with anger or scorn, pity or affection, according to the emotion which he was portraying.

When I look back and try to recall the salient features of his instruction, it seems to me that they may be summed up in the effort to furnish us, not so much with facts, as with principles. The chief value of a difficult lesson wasn't the learning of the lesson itself, but the discipline in concentration and perseverance which it furnished. He hated all slovenliness in the form of inattention and careless, half-learned work. He would never repeat his direction or instructions if he saw that we were listless. He never allowed us to say "I can't;" and if the phrase slipped out inadvertently, how his fine gray eyes would flash, and his rich voice ring out:

"Up! up! man, and try! Come! that's a coward's

word. Let me never hear it again from *your* lips—*you*, who are a Scot, with the memory of Bruce and Wallace as an inheritance!"

He had, too, a horror of lying, treachery, or ingratitude. He used to quote, with gusto, the proud saying of the Greek aristocracy: "*We, the truthful*"—implying that it was a trait of the base-born to lie, a mark, too, of cowardice.

After that, his chief solicitude was to make us love the best literature, and know what made its excellence. I have said that his first question to me was: "What have you read?" and it was also one of the last questions that he ever addressed to me. Books, he felt to be the safest, best companions of the intelligence; and he said that any man's education was assured if he knew a good book from a poor one, and loved reading.

Therefore, he set us at once to reading the world's great masterpieces, troubling himself very little, at first, as to whether we understood the purport of the author—he wished to accustom us to the atmosphere of the best, so that we might feel at home in it, and recognize it wherever we found it. He believed that all explanations outside of our experience were useless, and a mere waste of time. He never troubled our pleasure in an author by any questions about style or grammar. He never required us to analyze in any way what we read, feeling sure that analytic methods were not the way to make us feel truth and beauty; because they would tend to make us critical before we had learned to be appreciative, occupying us with the skeleton, when we should be enjoying the beauty of the body of the work. But he often referred to some suggestive passage in a book which we had read, when a proper occasion offered, thus recalling it to our memory with vivid force. For example, he very much disliked emphasis of all sorts—loud speech, noisy music, vulgar

over-dressing, officious politeness; and once calling our attention to a striking example of vulgarity in dress and manner in some American tourists, he said:

"Do you remember Jeanie Deans's experience with Mrs. Dabby and the queen? 'Mrs. Dabby,' she says, 'was dressed twice as grand, and was twice as big, and spoke twice as loud, and twice as muckle as the queen did, but she hadna the same goss-hawk glance that makes the skin creep and the knee bend; and though she had very kindly gifted her with a loaf of sugar and twa pounds of tea, yet she hadna athegither the sweet look that the queen had when she put the needle-book into her hand.'"

After that, *Mrs. Dabby* stood for us as the symbol of the vulgar parvenu, and we invented a Mr. Dabby and a great quantity of young Dabbies to fit all sorts of impertinent boasters, either national or individual.

He had a way at times of thinking aloud, as it were, before us; and sometimes the seed fell on stony ground, sometimes it found soil and took root. I remember, one day, we passed a little gnarled crab-tree on a ledge of rock and immediately afterwards a fine old oak, with a generous stretch of branches and ample shade.

"How foolish it would be," he said musingly, "to quarrel with the gnarled little tree because it is not so fine as the big one. It has grown as large as it could. It isn't to be blamed for its size, any more than the big one is to be praised as if it consciously grew into symmetrical beauty. Shouldn't we have the same forbearance with our cold and halting friends? They are as responsive as they can be. Let us cease to be exacting with them, and pity, not condemn them, for their infirmities."

I do not recall that he ever deliberately thrust moral lessons into our faces. He was not at all of those who are so solicitous that you shall see their light shine,

that they thrust their little candles under your nose, singe your eyebrows and drip tallow all over your clothes; but he managed to make us feel sincerely that there is such a thing as moral health as beautiful and desirable as health of the body; and that the signs of it are perfect truthfulness, sincerity, kindness, helpfulness, self-respect, self-control, courage, and fulfilment of duty.

To him education meant not an accumulation of facts and philosophic systems in the memory, but the free development of all the faculties of the mind so that a man can find in them the source of his happiness—an awakened curiosity, a power of logical thinking, a soul vibrating with sensibility, but strong enough to receive the shocks of evil fortune without breaking under them.

There was very little of what is called science admitted into the approved course of study at that time. Theology still dominated the theory of the universe; but Richard Glenn had read the Encyclopedists of France, he had studied Lamarck, he had observed and thought for himself. Without presuming to dogmatize, he laid in us the foundations of a wise skepticism that accepted fearlessly the conclusions of enlightened reason, no matter how humiliating they might be to our self-love; and tolerated contrary opinions venerable through age and custom.

I was thirty-four when Darwin's "Origin of Species" first appeared in 1859, and the main features of its theory had been familiar to me from boyhood.

However, the prominent feature of our education was linguistic. I happened to share with my young master an aptitude for learning languages, and we passed from Latin and Greek to the four great languages of modern Europe: French, German, Spanish, and Italian. Our tutor was not a philologist in the strict sense of the word, that is, he loved languages, not for their words, but for the ideas which they expressed; and the learning of a new language was to

us the entrance into a new literature—a new way of looking at this old world and at human life. He had his preference, too; he especially loved French for the light and life in it, and succeeded in making us love it too; conversing with us in it as often as in English; so that in writing it now, I seem to be writing in my mother-tongue.

CHAPTER IV

LOOKING FORWARD

THUS the years of my childhood slipped away in the happiness of conscious growth, and the joy of delightful companionship. But there were some shadows in the sunny landscape. The fruits of my education began to show themselves in a few years, in a marked difference in my tastes and my interests from those of my brothers and sisters. As I was naturally a boy of very strong family affections, the consciousness of this difference and its resulting estrangement, was extremely painful to me; and in spite of my father's prohibition, I tried to lessen it by speaking of my life and my studies at the château. But I soon found that instead of awakening an interest, I only excited envy and dislike in my brothers. They called me Lord George in derision, and asked me why I didn't go and live in the château for good, if I liked it so well. Then I saw the wisdom of my father's prohibition, and it grew easy for me, nay, it became necessary for me to hide my real self from them, and I began to live two lives; one of the soul, the other of the body, the mere surface of me. Yet I didn't grow indifferent to my family; on the contrary, my affections, wounded by their misunderstanding, seemed to deepen, I knew them better than ever before. I saw what I had not remarked, as a child, that my father and mother were as solitary as I, and that my father accepted his lot with a patience that savored much more of philosophy than of virtue. Perhaps I judged him by myself, but it seemed to me that he, too, had been a dreamer in his youth, with that fatal devise "*all or nothing*," which prepares the way for so much bitter disillusion, and

that he had deliberately destroyed his power to dream any more, and had grasped firmly the nettle of reality to crush its stings beyond the power of wounding him.

Like all those who dream, decisive action had probably been difficult for him, and had been learned late. The duties of husband and father, in which he had sought happiness, had finished by making a drudge of him, whose chief good was his daily bread.

My mother vaguely felt this bitterness in him, and wretched, because she was powerless to sweeten it, took her refuge, womanlike, in a kingdom of noble dreams which she called religion, accepting her destiny without complaint, finding a satisfactory solution to all its complications in the reflection, "God knows best."

As for my relations at the château, they were most harmonious. The young lord treated me, always, as if I were his equal—which does not mean that I felt that I was. He had in his bearing something superior which imposed respect without effort, something which lifted him so far above his infirmity that it very rarely occurred to me to pity him, and although he was only two months my senior, I felt him far older than I. Perhaps suffering in strong characters tends to mature them. While I was still thinking as a boy, he thought as a man, and as a proud ambitious man, treated unjustly by nature, and resolved to make his physical weakness forgotten by the solidity of his mind.

The strong bond, the subtle inexplicable sympathy between us, had grown stronger with the years. We were together a great deal, often making little excursions alone; I wheeling his chair and listening to him, as he talked of what interested him, or exchanging opinions with him and forming plans for the future. He especially liked the little clearing in the park where we had first met.

I remember, particularly, one afternoon which we spent there when we were sixteen years old—I almost a man in stature, he much smaller, much feebler, but

with a superb head and face that made one forget everything else. I never tired of it, it fascinated me anew every time I looked at it—that beautiful face with the wonderful eyes which seemed to speak twenty languages.

It was a lovely afternoon—one of those warm, fecund spring days when the sap seems to circulate more quickly in the veins and cells of every living thing, and plants aspire to see the light in flowers and leaves. White and yellow butterflies darted through the perfumed air, and a confused low murmur of insect life rose from the grass.

We had ceased talking a moment, and it was he who first broke the silence, saying:

“Do you ever have certain hours when you feel a surplus of life surge through you, and your soul feels too large for your body, and would break its prison just to breathe fully?—when if you were a woman you would weep bitterly and not know why you were weeping? *Sehnsucht!* that’s the word—sick with longing for an unknown happiness,—and all the suppressed energy cramped within you cries out for action! action! Oh, for a month I have felt force enough in me to create a world—and look at me, poor, impotent wretch, glued to this cursed chair!” He struck the arm of the chair a violent blow—and his face grew white and then purple with the blood that rushed to it. I looked at him a moment in amazement. I had never seen him so agitated, and I felt embarrassed, not only because I was thus an involuntary witness of what he himself would be the first to term girlish weakness, but because he had expressed the aimless unrest and melancholy which had often seized me of late, especially during the long, mild nights when the moonlight brightened my room. How many times, unable to sleep, I had risen, my heart swelled with vague desires, my head burning with a thousand projects for the future, in which I saw myself rich, famous, loved!—loved by

whom? Whose was the face that always came to me in these lonely hours, sometimes smiling, sometimes sad? I had not the courage to dream out the fancy fully—Oh, it was madness to do that; as well wish for the moon and the stars as playthings!

I looked at my young master, reddening as much as he, hung my head and said nothing.

“If I had *your* body, *your* health to second my ambition,” he continued, “do you think I should stay here, burying my head in books, rethinking the thoughts of others, acting over again the deeds of others? No, I should create for myself a world in which I should see my ideas take body and live, rising in large and beautiful cities, or marching in victorious armies. Oh, you don’t know how many times I run, I jump, I fly across the country, mounted on a fiery horse at the head of brave men.”

He hesitated; his voice trembled; there were tears in his eyes. My heart beat furiously. He dashed the tears away with a quick gesture, and smiled at me, saying:

“Come, come, don’t look so wretched, Sancho. Your poor old Don Quixote has come to his senses again. That’s the first and the last time you’ll ever see him charge at windmills. You see, I heard some of our guests talking this morning. One of them was a man who has traveled a great deal and has just come back after an absence of fifteen years. He was talking of the general unrest among the people—they are rising everywhere, discontented, trying to shake off, not only the social, but the natural inequality which exists among men—and making a fiasco of it from the French Revolution to Owen’s social settlement at New Harmony, Ind., in the U. S. By the way, he visited that settlement in ’28, talked with Owen himself—who was confident that he was in a fair way to restore Eden on earth—and his settlement then was riddled from top to bottom with discontent, envy, hatred, and all sorts

of anti-social feelings among its members, and toppled over like a card-house that it was, the very next year—isn't it all such stupid nonsense! I am only a boy in years, I know, but I don't have to live to be fifty to know that no social organization is possible with absolute equality as a basis. There must be men who work and men who think, there must be poverty as well as riches to offer an incentive to labor, and when it comes to a downright fighting chance for distinction, it's the poor boy, not the rich fellow, who has all odds in his power. How do you suppose a man can work with all his might, when pleasure and ease are at his elbow calling to him in a hundred different forms, while the poor devil has hunger and hardship at his heels, forever stinging and pricking him on. What do you suppose is the origin of the nobility but natural superiority, the keener eye, the quicker brain, the longer staying power; and what is the cause of its degeneracy but leisure, wealth and power. We shall deserve to go down when we only hold our place by inherited name and not inherited natural power. Do I deserve to be your lord, when with a turn of your wrist you could dash me down that cliff yonder? Oh, I think of these things lying awake at night, and I see how the great men, now, are coming from the ranks, how their thoughts are moving the world, their discoveries and inventions are revolutionizing labor, and we, we are like those sterile, hot-house roses running by cultivation to nothing but showy petals. Oh, I want to see more, know more, feel more, that I, too, may think and move others to think; and for that I need you, George—I need your legs to run about for me, your eyes to see for me, in places where I cannot go. I shall ask my father to let us go abroad next year—will you go with me, George?"

"Go? Of course I will. How good you are," and in a transport of enthusiasm I pressed to my lips the hand that he had extended towards me.

'At this moment I saw a figure in white furtively approaching behind him, and a smile on the beautiful face, the eyes full of loving mischief. She lifted her hand to warn me that I must not give a sign of her approach, and while the young lord continued to speak of his plans, she stole nearer and nearer, and then quite close behind him, suddenly clapped her two white hands over his eyes, at the same time kissing him, saying:

"Who is it?"

"Who is it? Why who in the world but you, Margaret. What other woman but you and mother would want to kiss *me*?"

"What other woman? Why *all* women. You dear, handsome fellow, if they knew you as well as we do. Isn't that so, George?" and she turned to me.

In every life there are critical moments, big with consequences, good or evil. I was standing before her, as I had stood a hundred times without betraying myself either to her or to my own full consciousness, but at this moment it flashed over me that I adored her. I gave a name to this sentiment that made me timid and awkward in her presence, and dream of her, absent.

I answered nothing. I trembled from head to foot. I felt the warm blood surge to my heart, then return in floods to my face.

What would she think of me, if she guessed my secret? What would her brother think, who esteemed and loved me beyond my merits?

But she did not seem to notice my confusion; she was thinking only of him.

"You see," she continued, "he does not answer. That is because he does not know you so well as I, although you are always together of late. Do you know that you are not giving me any more of your time, little brother? What have you two to say to each other that is so important that you must steal away to say it. I get tired alone. They are going to call me a woman pretty soon, and force me to shine in society,

but before that I want to be your little sister, your girl sister a while longer. I am afraid of this big world that would laugh at me if it knew what really pleases me instead of its noisy showy self—a walk in the woods gathering wild flowers; a chat with my brother, and George near by, or a fairy story in which the princes are always good and handsome, and love only just such silly girls as myself."

"But that is just what I don't care for any more, Margie." He stroked her hand as he talked. "I am tired of being a boy, I want to be a man. I want to see this world which frightens you. The fairy stories charm me no longer. It's *real* people I am hungry to know—people who think, people who act."

"How strange!" she said thoughtfully. "It seems to me so beautiful to be young and not to have to care about all these stupid realities. I should like always to be just eighteen. Nineteen seems so old, so old. Do I already seem old to you, George?"

She looked at me quizzically, her fresh, young face full of charm, and, though still a child in some respects, she had all the feminine instincts of coquetry. She must have known she was beautiful. Her mirror told her that every day. I do not know what I answered, but I still hear her cheerful laugh ring out, and if I should live to be a hundred, I shall never forget what she was to me that afternoon in June—to me a boy in years, but a man in feeling. Something inexpressibly sweet and adorable, away above me, whose beauty and sweetness were never meant for me. And yet so generous, so perfect, so disinterested, was my love that I was content to be her faithful dog, and find my happiness in her smiling tolerance of me.

She had coupled my name with her brother's in mentioning what she liked best, and that was quite enough to fill me with a foolish, rapturous ecstasy, in which I lived for weeks like one surrounded by a rosy mist that softens, spiritualizes, beautifies all objects within the

range of vision. I saw nothing as it really was. I lived in a sort of joyous delirium, which exalted and at the same time softened my soul; so that I was capable of all the heroisms, and yet vibrated sensitive as the wind harp to the slightest touch; but I was ignorant of real life as a babe in its mother's arms.

Although nearly all my lessons at the château had been learned and recited with Lord Eliot, there were some hours in the modern languages in which Lady Margaret was allowed to join us. It was in these hours that I learned to know well all her tastes. I have but to shut my eyes to see her in fancy, as I saw her in the class-room, always dressed with exquisite simplicity; the dazzling freshness of her youthful beauty, her only ornament. She sat by preference near the south window, the morning sun in summer gilding her rich brown hair as she bent over her book. She was not so serious and attentive a student as her brother, and her eyes often wandered outside; but she had a quick ear, imitated sounds well and learned to speak a foreign tongue with a truer accent than either her brother or I acquired. Her voice had a peculiar magnetic quality that often made me tremble with delight.

I was always so conscious of her presence that I was more or less stupid before her, and suffered horribly at times, thinking that she must consider me a block-head; but she was too well-bred ever to show anything but the most perfect kindness to me, although she was never expansive or affectionate with me as with her brother, whom she adored. She liked better to be with him than with anyone else; and as a proof of the generosity of her nature, I do not recall a single instance in which she showed any jealousy of me, though she often saw my company preferred to hers. She wished him to be happy in his own way.

And certainly he deserved the deep, faithful love which she gave him. I have mentioned the unusual force of his mind; but I have given no idea of a cer-

tain tenacity of will that he had, and a beautiful courage in suppressing signs of physical suffering which was as wonderful as it was beautiful. He could not endure to be pitied. Pity seemed to him an expression of superiority, and he was too proud to accept it from anyone but his mother. There was not a weak fiber in his mind of steel. He never limited himself to the tasks assigned, but always outran his lessons, and I, who would have been ashamed to be left behind, did with difficulty what was mere play for him. I owe to his example a force in persistency that does not naturally belong to me. I have always been naturally inclined to doubt my own powers, and therefore am easily discouraged. He taught me what can be done with moderate powers by sticking to a task day after day.

At first, his quiet confidence in himself, his habit of saying "I know" in place of "I think so," seemed a want of modesty; but it was only the admirable veracity of a mind naturally strong and dominant. I learned that he never expressed an opinion until he had grounds for it, that he never undertook anything that he could not do. He knew his limitations and kept within the sphere of them.

He had naturally a very passionate nature, but he early learned that all outbursts of violence ended by crippling still more his feeble store of physical strength, and he conquered his irritability as he conquered the daily tasks set before him. He was an indefatigable reader, and every trait of heroism or wisdom or moral elevation excited in him a passionate admiration, and I have often heard him express a noble jealousy because he had not had his part in some beautiful deed. This thirst for the ideal as it shows itself in action was his dominant characteristic, accompanied by a power of distinguishing the great from the little, the true from the false.

In the course of our historical studies, we had read

in connection with the rise and growth of Catholicism many of the lives of the saints, and he drew from this reading a consolation that was really touching. These examples of moral heroism and exalted abnegation seemed at last to have shown him a field of action in which the soul was the actor; the body, the enemy. I do not mean that he became a disciple of asceticism. On the contrary, he vigorously combated the monkish ideal, and believed that to withdraw from the world is not the most effective way of combating its evils, that it is on the contrary a kind of sublime egotism resulting, as all egotisms do, in mutilating the soul by blurring its visions. One world at a time, was his devise; he did not believe in eating dry bread in this world in the hope of having it well-buttered in the next, nor that it is necessary to make a hell of this life to gain heaven in a prospective one.

But what touched him in these lives was just the qualities he needed in his own, namely, the courage to bear pain—the energy that never sleeps.

As for me, I drew from them quite another lesson. I was struck by the genius for loving manifested by these saints whose ardent hearts slaked their thirst with intoxicating draughts of divine love. I saw that there are not two ways of loving, and that the saint as well as the sinner employs the same language. I saw that all these immense loves sought solitude and were nourished in silence. I saw, also, that they were woven of a thousand illusions, bizarre explanations of the most trivial events, and that reason went often very far astray in these flights of the soul to embrace infinity.

In this colossal egotism, I perceived the man in the saint, understood him and pardoned him. Did not I, too, love far, far beyond me? but life was smiling on me. I felt no need yet for examples of courage, and I found a language for my emotions in this language of love that I learned in the Lives of the Saints. Their austerities repelled me, their devotion attracted me. I

remember particularly how Saint Bernard won me wholly, when his austerity made me quite despair of his humanity, by his letters to the monks who had left him, and one in particular on the death of his brother. His tenderness when he was tender was more than admirable, it was sublime,—the superb flowering of a long, ungracious reticence. He was like the century plant that spends itself in a single flowering; but, to tell the truth, I liked better the rose that blooms every summer.

CHAPTER V

ON FOREIGN SHORES

So passed my boyhood into youth. My experiences were not those of young students in general. It was not my vacations that brought to me ideas of liberty and joy; on the contrary, they were infinitely stupid, sterile periods which I must travel alone. They commenced with the middle of July and ended about the 15th of September. They meant no more lessons, no more visits at the castle, no more of that sweet expansion of soul in an atmosphere fitted to nourish sentiment and joy. The days dragged slowly, drearily by. I tried as much as possible to be alone, to find my society in my dreams and the memories of the absent ones I loved. My father, finding that I continued in favor at the castle, had gradually ceased to require anything of me, allowing me to do quite as I pleased, saying that as too many cooks spoil the broth, he wouldn't interfere any longer with my education as a gentleman. I thought that he treated me coldly; perhaps he did not intend to; but I felt hurt, and my mother, with the intuition of love, saw that I was wounded and secretly lavished an unwonted tenderness on me. But because I feared to be the cause of any further estrangement between her and my father, I avoided as much as possible being seen alone with her. How much she must have suffered, and how much I could have done to lessen her suffering by an appearance of contentment, I know now. But youth is cruel and egoistic, because it lacks the deep experiences of the heart. It is not deeply rooted in its environments and is ready to quit them at the first seductive voice that calls it. It does not live in the present; it belongs to the

future by all its hopes and dreams. When our lord and his family returned in the fall, life recommenced for me. What a restless, nervous joy possessed me, some days before their arrival! I could not sleep at night, I could scarcely eat during the day. The sun seemed to shine with a sweeter, lovelier light, inundating me with floods of joy. No more solitude, no more sadness, and my heart overflowing with happiness made all things easy, I forgave my father his coldness and my brothers their envy. I furtively kissed my mother's hand, and she, caressing me gently, showed by her moist eyes and trembling lips that she knew the terrible sadness of those who do not suffice to make the happiness of the ones they love.

Judge then of my joy when I learned in my eighteenth year that I was to accompany my young lord to the continent and remain with him until the completion of his education by foreign travel. It meant the completion of my own education, too, and not only that, but the cessation of the painful dual life I had been leading. I should belong, now, wholly to my young master; for as to any idea of any individual future separate from his, it never so much as entered my head. It seemed to me that his father, in educating me along with his son, had destined me to be the latter's secretary and assistant in whatever plans he might wish to undertake, and although he had not committed himself so far, I feel sure that that was his intention. At any rate, it was the intention of my young master, who had several times assured me that he needed me, and wished never to be separated from me.

With regard to my position for the present, I was to continue my study with him under his tutor who was to accompany us, and I was, also, to render him the services of a valet, under the directions of an experienced man who had been with him from his childhood, and was physician, nurse, and valet in one.

We set sail for France in June, 1842, spent a year

and a half in various travels on the continent in which we were sometimes joined by the family, and finally settled at Paris. The year had been a truce to serious study; we had been looking at cities, visiting museums, art-galleries and fashionable salons, getting, in short, a bird's-eye view of life, preparatory to settling down to our own life-task. And what was that task? For my own part, I am ashamed to confess that I did not at all know. I had neither definite plans, nor definite ambition. I lived from day to day in a sort of happy dream, knowing no more of what real life is, as an independent, thoughtful existence implying struggle and prudence, than if I had been a child in my mother's arms. As I have hinted before, my passionate attachment to my young lord, and his confidence in me, made it almost impossible for me to conceive of a calling which would separate me from him. Those of his tastes which I did not naturally share I cultivated, because they were his—and as social questions deeply interested him, I, too, turned my attention in that direction, and though I hadn't the temerity to suggest remedies, I became tolerably expert in detecting the weaknesses of the present system of society. That it requires absolutely no penetration to detect them, when one suffers from them, is self-evident; but, as a matter of fact, it isn't those who suffer from them who are the first to complain—so far as I know, no great labor movement was ever instituted by a laborer, no plausible social theory was ever proposed by a man who himself bore the burdens of the very poor and wrote with a hand made callous by hard work. It is the man who has looked on at the stone-breaking with his hands in his pockets, and imagined how his own back and arms would ache at the task, who has been the first to denounce stone-breaking as inhuman, and to declare that if it must be done, we should all take our turn at it. To be sure, he doesn't seem to show any more eagerness to take his turn than anybody else, but he enjoys

himself immensely talking about it; and if he talks long and loud enough, he may end by creating a social revolution, as witness Rousseau.

Of course, we read Rousseau—it was the day of social experiments, and Rousseau was the prophet of all sentimental reformers. Undoubtedly, like all young people, we should have been fascinated beyond the power of criticism by that wonderfully lucid, rapid style, palpitating with feeling, which seduced his age, had we not read him with our tutor, who tempered our admiration by the sane criticism of reason and experience. While admitting the power of his genius, he showed us the limitations and exaggerations of it, due to his morbid sensibility and sentimental egotism. He made us feel that, while no writer has ever been so keen-eyed and true an anatomist of the sentimental weaknesses and passions of the human heart, no writer of equal power was ever so profoundly ignorant of human nature, as it appears in the vast majority of men. He knew only one man—himself; and that man he idealized. He measured strength by emotivity; and when he wept and trembled, he felt himself divine. In his solitude he multiplied the image of himself and called it humanity. It never entered his wildest conception that man has come up from the brutes, and bears the stamp of his brute origin in a thousand low instincts and desires that civilization can no more eradicate than the earth can get rid of her soil and still nourish the life which she begets. He dreamed of a primitive man who sprang perfect from the soil, whose days were spent in delicious reveries and noble thoughts, broken only by a few hours of necessary toil in which he found the joy of legitimate action at the same time that he supplied himself with simple food and simple raiment. He degenerated by increased wants, by pride, ambition, cruelty; and he called his degeneracy civilization. He hewed down the forests, he bridged rivers, he robbed and murdered his neighbors, and called it conquest; he

built cities and they sheltered rapacity, poverty, vice—and the stench and shame of his life cries to heaven in every civilized nation on the globe. Away then with civilization—step backward into the freedom and beauty of life with nature as the primitive races, the so-called savages, live it, and you will be saved.

It all sounds absurdly bald and flat, ridiculously false, stripped of its rhetoric and sophistry—this social ideal of Rousseau's, as reduced in this way to its elements; but it was seductive eloquence, it was the truth on the inspired lips of a prophet, to the restless idealists of his age. It was Don Quixote's harangue on the acorns expanded to volumes: "Happy times and happy ages were those which the ancients termed the golden age! not because gold, so prized in this, our iron age, was to be obtained in that fortunate period without toil; but because they who then lived were ignorant of those two words, Mine and Thine."

There are Don Quixotes still delivering the old harangue; and there are not wanting many Sancho Panzas, now as then, who listen in open-mouthed wonder, and believe their doughty knights are to lead them into a land flowing with milk and honey; or as Schopenhauer puts it, "a do-nothing land in which everything grows of itself and roasted pigeons fly around, and every one finds his ardently beloved at once, and wins her without difficulty."

Young as we were, neither my lord Eliot nor I believed in this do-nothing paradise, and we had no illusions about the perfectibility of man, but saw that the human race is as deeply indebted for its progress to its imperfections as to its perfections; and that they are not to be eliminated any more than the shadows from the sunlight.

To be sure, we did not arrive at this mature reflection so early without being helped to it. That is always a great day in which some profound truth lights up the dark places of the mind, and I shall never forget

one snowy winter day in Elberfeld, when I chanced upon a stray volume of Ludwig Börne in the inn at which we were stopping. Börne has been a favorite of mine ever since. If he has not the brilliant whimsical wit of Heine with its sudden transformations into genuine poetry, he has a very delightful vein of humor all his own, and a command of stinging sarcasm, based on a large fund of common sense, that assures him a place among the immortals.

The day in question I read his little allegory entitled *Honestus*. I have read it many times since and always with a fresh wonder that no writer has ever found in it a suggestion for an anti-Utopian romance to show the reverse side of the countless looking backwards and forwards into ideal states of society that are no more practicable than a midsummer night's dream, or Gonzalo's famous commonwealth in *The Tempest*, whose "latter end forgets the beginning."

CHAPTER VI

A FABLE FOR COMMUNISTS AND DREAMERS OF HUMAN PERFECTIBILITY

HONESTUS is the story of a young Swedish artist, naturally kind-hearted and joyous, who once had a chance at trying to set the world right, and set it all wrong, with as fatal consequences as rash Phaeton's attempt to drive the chariot of the sun.

"Make all men good" was his generous cry to the magician who had dazzled him with his wonders.

"Make all men good: make them happy!"

The magician paled, and said in a low, trembling voice:

"Don't ask that, my son. I dare not refuse your request; but do not persist in it. Sin is rottenness, and sin is the source of life." But Oscar in the intoxication of his philanthropy did not understand the old man's words. He fell down before him, clasped his knees and with hot tears streaming down his face, implored: "O mighty father, give men virtue, give them happiness."

The magician granted the prayer. The midnight hour struck. The magician stretched his magic wand towards the east, west, north, and south, and pronounced mysterious words. Sweet harp tones sounded from the heavens, and from the earth rose hideous laughter. Oscar, trembling between rapture and horror, asked the meaning of the horrible laughter. "Hush, my son; that is the spirit of malice. Do not irritate him. I have no power over him; come out into the air, that we may see our work."

They stepped out; it was a still, solemn night, and Oscar lifted his eyes devoutly to the starry sky above

him. The old man was touched: "Rejoice once more in this sweet night, it is the last on earth. Night is sin, and the sun will never more set."

They passed into a gloomy street, and saw a ladder leaning against a house, and a man climbing it who looked anxiously about him. "Will you let that happen?" asked Oscar. "Perhaps he will murder the careless sleepers." "Be calm, my son. The theft has already been committed. The midnight hour gave the villain his honesty again, and he is bringing back the stolen goods."

Honestus and the joyous youth went on, seeing everything, themselves invisible. "What voices are those I hear weeping in yonder great building?" "They are robbers and murderers in prison, they are praying." They entered a room lighted by a night-lamp. A beautiful woman, with loosened hair, knelt before the cradle of her child, kissed the sleeping infant and wept over it. A man stood on the threshold of the door, and, reddening, stretched his hand towards the woman, and the mother covered her eyes. "Who are they, Honestus?" "That man is the seducer, who has come to the wife of his friend at the hour she appointed for him. My magic-staff was swift. Repentance came before the guilt; the mother is imploring forgiveness of her child, and the man is departing in sadness from the sweet sin."

They came to a great square, beautified with many trees; and from all the houses round about rushed thousands of men; soldiers hastened past, infantry and cavalry; flags waved, drums beat, cannons were planted, and everywhere resounded the clang of weapons and the cries of men. "What has happened?" "Those who come out of the houses are gamblers, cheats, debauched men and spies, whom the magic of virtue has chased out of their lurking-places; and power, unaccustomed to virtue and trembling before her, has sent out her multitudes to meet this boldness."

The morning dawned, but the stillness of night remained. No carts rattled over the streets, no huckster shrieked, no hammer-stroke was heard, the market-place was empty. "What is the reason of this stillness, Honestus?" "Men have no longer any false desires: they are satisfied and rest." Before a baker's shop, stood a clamoring multitude, that asked in vain for bread. The bread had already been given away for nothing to the famishing. Hundreds of corpses lay on the streets. "Who are these unfortunates?" "They are spies, that would rather die of hunger than feed themselves longer on disgrace." They came before the palace of the king, which was unguarded. The king no longer feared anyone, since no one feared him any longer. They entered the hall where the courtiers were assembled, and they saw wet eyes. An old gray-haired man threw himself weeping at the feet of a youth, and said: "Forgive me. I have slandered you." They entered the king's apartments. The king sat upon his throne, and a woman rushed shrieking through the crowd, threw herself on her knees and cried: "Hold back your sword; he is innocent!" And the king's counselor paled and said: "O master, I have deceived thee." And the king, weeping, descended from his throne.

Honestus and the trembling Oscar hastened out of the palace. They walked along the river, and came upon the corpse of a young girl. Oscar turned his pale face away. "Unhappy creature!" said Honestus. "The past night robbed her of her innocence, and in despair at the loss of her richest jewel, she sought death in the waves." They came to a bridge, and on it stood a tall, pale youth, looking now at the sky, now at the water. He was a pitiful object, yet his eye was dry. Oscar felt himself powerfully drawn to the stranger. "Who is this youth, my father?" "Away, away," cried Honestus in a tone of horror, "and weep, Oscar, that you are a man." "O stay, my father;

speak, who is this suffering youth?" "Step nearer, Oscar. Look at these cheeks, how pale they are! Once they were rose-red and only grew pale when he heard of oppression. Look at those arms, how thin and slack they are; once they were strong and hard as steel to fight for freedom and justice. Look at that burnt-out eye. Once it beamed, lighted by heaven itself, to kindle the heart of a pious girl. Ah! he was so strong and good; but who is too strong and too good for the seducer? The sly tools of power slipped up behind him to ruin him. They mingled, in his healthy soul, what is most shameful in innocent play, most intoxicating in wine, most poisonous in love. Then he yielded to base gold, to the base tinsel of honor. They led him from fun to frivolity, from frivolity to falseness, from falseness to crime. This ear, once open only to the voice of virtue, listened slyly for the unguarded word. This eye, once darting glances of love, sought the dark bypaths of confidence and killed those who innocently trusted it. This tongue that sang love and friendship became an adder and stung. Then he betrayed the true friend that died yesterday on the gallows. The deluded man received his last kiss from his betrayer and whispered in his ear: 'Revenge me.' The devil looked at him, laughing with scorn, and in the evening he rioted with the recompense for his crime. Then came the fearful midnight over him, the midnight which at your request, Oscar, I gave to the world. A frightful dream awoke him from his slumber. 'I will revenge you,' he shrieked in despair, and rushed to the bridge.

"Since midnight, the unhappy wretch has sought death in the waves, fearing to find it, and seeking it again." The pale youth stared now at the water. "Hold him back, Honestus," cried the shuddering Oscar; "it is too terrible to appear before the judge with such fearful guilt." "Oscar," answered the magician, "here ends my power. Sin has left him, repentance has come. What he owes to his guilt, he will repay." Oscar fell

on his knees before the magician, imploring pitifully: "Then give him back his sins and take away repentance. Give all men their desires, again. Give them back their vices. Give all men their sins, again."

He awoke—they had them, again.

I remember rising from the reading of this little allegory, shocked, as it were, into the consciousness that all that gives color, variety, and tragic beauty to life comes from this very play of the passions, which often results so fatally to the happiness of the individual. Kill them in man, tame him to the image of the patient ox that draws his cart, and it is all over with the dignity and beauty of life; we shall have exchanged virtue and struggle for impotence and stagnation.

I rushed with my book to share its contents with my young master. He was not so excitable as I; he read it through attentively and said:

"He is right. The lily, white and fragrant, is rooted in mud. It isn't an air plant."

The doctrine of equality, we felt, also, to be entirely false, and would no more have believed it possible to make a wise man out of a naturally stupid one by changing his environment, than we would have expected to gather roses from a gooseberry bush by planting it in a rose-garden. Therefore, in an epidemic of socialistic theories, we presented the anomaly of two enthusiastic young students without a theory. We looked, we listened, and were content to learn.

CHAPTER VII

STILL LEARNING

AT Paris, we lodged in some beautiful apartments looking out on the Parc Monceau. Here for the first time in my life I had a certain responsibility. The health and comfort of my young master were, in a great measure, in my hands. But the services which I rendered him were a privilege for me and not a task. He belonged to those rare souls, intimacy with whom tends to increase, rather than to cool the affection. Possibly the secret of this lies in a certain chaste reserve which it is impossible to violate without being either stupid or brutal, and I was neither the one nor the other. I knew how to respect that delicate veil in which every beautiful soul wraps itself, without entirely concealing itself; and I learned, too, though perhaps later, in reflecting upon the unbroken harmony of our relations, that a great love cannot survive a great intimacy without these chaste reserves. We become so obtuse, not to say brutified, by custom and facility, that it requires some mystery to keep alive that fear and veneration which lie at the bottom of every profound sentiment. This friend of my childhood and my youth never became common to me; that is to say, I never penetrated the deepest recesses of his soul. There was always in him some new ground to explore. He was interested in everything; he had beautiful enthusiasms which were not mere transitory surface excitements. He had an unerring taste that led him directly to what is fine and noble, a power of losing himself in thought and reverie which to a great degree compensated him for the malady that shut him out from action. Seated in the shade of a tree, watching apparently the patches

of blue sky through the foliage, his mind took flight, traveled through distant countries, and brought back their treasures.

People were naturally more to him than books or pictures, and though aristocrat by birth and by many of his tastes, he talked willingly with everybody, and always with profit and pleasure, wherever he found naturalness or sincerity. His handsome face, his natural eloquence, a rare courtesy that always distinguished him, made him a great favorite with women; and had he chosen, he might have always been the center of a little coterie of devotees who would have asked nothing better than to flatter and amuse him. But he had a great contempt for what is called a "ladies' man."

"I'll leave that to you," he said, jesting, one day to me. "You have more time to waste than I, and are better equipped for the rôle. There's no talking seriously to a woman under fifty, and not even at that age, if she has ever been a great beauty, and still retains some marks of it. All conversation with them is only a disguised coquetry on both sides; and by the time you have learned how to say, 'You are fascinating, I love you,' in a thousand different, uncompromising ways, there is no time for anything else. There are a few women I have read about, I should like to have known —women with hearts and brains as well as beauty. Should I have forgotten everything but their beauty? I don't know. I think not—but I've seen no woman, as yet, for an hour of whose society I would exchange ten minutes with a sensible man. As for the cathedrals, the art-galleries, the museums, the places made memorable by great historical facts, they do very well as speaking for a man in his absence, but I'd turn from them all for a day with the man himself who has thought and lived."

This taste had undoubtedly been cultivated by his having met as guests of his father, in his home and in the capitals of the kingdom, the most brilliant intellects of his time. He had heard them discuss serious prob-

lems, and his precocious intelligence had been enriched in a remarkable manner. As for me, my life had passed wholly without incident, or without any occupation but that of my studies and the familiar duties of family life. I had, therefore, brought to Europe the inexperience of extreme youth. Everything was wonderful to me, everything delighted me—except the Florentine school of old masters in the art-galleries. I had not yet submitted to the spell there is in the names of Botticelli, Bellini, Ghirlandajo, Fra Filippo Lippi, Cimabue, and Giotto.

I had not yet studied the history of art as an expression of religious sentiment, so that I had no interest in the pictures outside of the canvas; and, there, I only saw a dreary collection of dry, cracked, harsh-brown, sharp-nosed, cadaverous saints; melancholy, shapeless virgins; pug-nosed cherubs, and bulbous-headed, pot-bellied infant Christs with circles around their heads to distinguish them from the profane, who were often much more attractive to me. I have since developed a taste for some of these very pictures that I would not at that time have consented to live with, for a small fortune; but I am not prepared to say whether the taste is a wholly artificial one due to the familiarity that breeds endurance and then liking; or whether it is a natural development, growing out of an acquired power to see beauty that lies deeper than surfaces.

My days in Paris were divided into three parts: in the morning I read and conversed with my lord and our tutor; in the afternoon we drove out to see the city, the parks or the suburbs; in the evenings we amused ourselves in society or at the theater. Three afternoons in the week I had entirely to myself; and I always passed them roaming about the city, sometimes visiting various places of historical interest, sometimes spending hours among the old bookstalls along the Seine. One day I ran across an old copy in three volumes of Mercier's "*L'An deux mille quatre cent quarante; rêve s'il*

en fut jamais." The date of its publication was 1786, and I learned by its preface that it had first appeared in 1770. I bought it at a bargain, and went back to my lodgings as happy as if I had been lucky in a speculation involving a fortune. The author was unknown to me, but I learned later that he had also written a book called "*Tableau de Paris*," a very interesting and faithful picture of the life and appearance of the capital, as he saw it at the close of the eighteenth century.

His "*Year 2440*" interested Lord Eliot and myself very much. It was one of those clever dreams about a future state of society in which justice and plenty are to reign on earth, and poverty and crime, if not eradicated, are to be reduced to the minimum. There was some good sense in the book, mingled with a good deal of nonsense. We were not a little amused at the very humble and subordinate rôle women are to play under this new régime, the author showing a decided contempt for their intelligence and a great deal of indignation over the important part which they play in social life at present. We wondered what women in general would think about it. We were not destined to wonder long. Our enlightenment was due to an acquaintance that I made shortly after, with a young man of twenty-three, an enthusiastic communist and president of an association whose object it was to spread the doctrines of communism, and awaken a spirit of distrust and revolt among the workingmen and the poor.

It was mere chance that procured me this acquaintance. I had lost my way one afternoon in an obscure quarter of Paris, and I asked for directions of the first man whom I met. The young man whom I accosted replied courteously, saying that his way led in my direction, and that if I had no objection he would accompany me. I thanked him, and we continued our road together. I had not spoken very much before he discovered the stranger in my accent, and asked me if I were not an Englishman. I replied that I was a

subject of England, and he showed at once a great deal of enthusiasm and interest, assuring me that he had studied English, had even spent a half year in London, and was very fond of the English nation, not at all sharing the prejudices of his countrymen.

“You have,” he continued, “more frankness, more good sense in your country than we have in ours. You have not yet been so stupid as to show that you can’t govern yourselves, as we did in the Revolution. We have lost by our folly, not only the confidence of the soberer part of our own nation, but that of all nations. We struck a blow at human progress, meaning to strike it for it, from which it may take centuries to recover.” He continued to speak in this fashion, and finally concluded by inviting me to be present at one of the assemblies over which he presided.

I was not long in accepting his invitation. It was an excellent opportunity to see the Frenchman at home, and it might be that I should witness another revolution in the egg.

CHAPTER VIII

A WOMAN IN REVOLT

THE meeting took place in a large, musty-smelling, subterranean hall, badly lighted, and furnished with wooden benches and straw-bottomed chairs. The walls, up to a certain height, were blackened by the pressure of innumerable dirty shoulders and greasy heads. The ceiling was low and black with the fumes of oil-lamps, suspended from a central chandelier, and also attached at regular intervals along the walls. At one end of the hall ran a low platform, on which stood an ink-spotted table and two or three chairs.

It was a chill, cloudy November night, and the atmosphere of the crowded room was nauseously close and heavy after the sharp air outside. The house was not yet called to order; every man had his hat on; many were smoking, and amidst the confused clatter of voices a boisterous laugh rang out, now and then.

My dress and manner, so entirely different from the rest of the audience, made me so conspicuous that I was at once pointed out, and very likely would not have been allowed to remain, had not my new friend immediately taken me under his protection. The whole experience was so entirely new to me that my heart beat rapidly with the excitement of novelty, and I looked with eager curiosity at these young men (they looked all of them under thirty); and an instinct which served me in place of experience assured me that these hands were too nervous, too inexperienced, to mold the future well. Their faces expressed that sort of precocious audacity which so often passes for intelligence. Their language was in harmony with their faces. It was

audacity and egotism incarnate. No veneration, no logic, no hesitation, no compromise;—only an air of insolence and hatred for the past, effrontery and audacity for the present and a blind puerile confidence in the future which was to be theirs, and theirs alone. They had a singular way of talking about society, not as if it were an aggregation of individuals whose separate destiny is due to a countless number of correlated circumstances, but as if it were a single individual, a sort of hideous, immoral monster, deliberately bent on reducing three-fourths of the human race to slavery and wretchedness to serve the remaining fourth. They had no conception of the fact that circumstances have no power to radically change human nature; that the utmost they can do to any living creature, plant, animal, or man is to determine whether or not each is to reach the highest development of which each is individually capable. The character of every living entity is determined at its birth by natural laws to which we have no key. Each seed in plant-life contains the germ of what it can become. The acorn will be an oak. The dusty powder on the frond of a fern will reproduce its kind; but soil, climate, favorable or unfavorable circumstances, will determine whether the oak will tower up towards the skies and spread its branches widely, freely; or whether it will remain dwarfed and scanty-limbed; and whether the fern is to rival a tree in size and beauty, or to tremble in the winds, six inches above the ground. So it is with the moral nature of man; no circumstances can develop in him that which is not born in him. The wisdom of Socrates could not make a sage of Alcibiades, nor the humane philosophy of Seneca penetrate the brute mind of Nero. The infamous Commodus was the son of Marcus Aurelius, and Voltaire, nursed in the lap of the Jesuits, went out of their schools a skeptic to make the world laugh with him at what he had been taught.

But these young reformers were of quite another

opinion. They seemed never to have understood that homely adage which sums up the common experience of mankind: "You can't make a silk purse out of a sow's ear." They were quite sure you could. Only feed and clothe your brute man well, and you will make a gentleman of him equal to the best of his kind. Alas! they forgot that when they harangued against the rich and the noble as the vile oppressors of humanity, they were emphatically proving by their very criticism of them the impotency of rank and wealth, food and clothes, to transform men into sages and philanthropists.

I was at this stage of my mental comments on what I heard, when a change in the nature of the discussion took place. I had noticed, on my entrance, that there were a few women in the audience, one of whom, in particular, was the object of general attention; and if beauty, youth, and that indescribable sparkle of physical health can deserve it, she was in every way most worthy to receive it. On the question of woman's place in the commonwealth, she rose to discuss it.

There are women of whom we seem incapable of asking anything more than what they so richly give us in their intoxicating beauty. We pardon everything to their loveliness, even their stupidity; for beauty seems always the highest manifestation of intelligence, and its silent eloquence speaks more effectually than any language of the tongue. But this woman had the superfluous gift of wit and intellect. She was a little above the ordinary stature of her sex, perfectly formed, and walked with an ease and dignity remarkable in a woman of the people. She had an abundance of dark wavy hair, a face rather oval than round, of that rich pale color which belongs to the southern type of beauty and harmonizes so admirably with the large black eyes that accompany it. Her eyes were peculiarly fascinating; the lids drooped a little at the outer corners, giving them a certain appealing expression, as if they said, "Love me—for I love you."

She advanced to the front of the hall, but did not mount the platform, although urged to do so, saying in a rich, full voice:

“I am not a little woman. I can see very well all the heads before me, and I am sure that you can see me.” She held in her hand a book, which without any explanation or comment, she opened and began to read aloud:

“The affable and complaisant man who deigned to instruct me, continued in the same tone of frankness: ‘You know that women have no other dowry than their virtue and their charms. They have grown interested in cultivating their moral qualities, so by this legislative measure, we have killed the hydra of coquetry, so fertile in whims, vices and follies.’

“‘What! no dowry? Women have nothing of their own, and who can marry them?’

“‘Women have no dowry, because by nature they are dependent on the sex that makes their strength and their glory, and whom nothing ought to withdraw from this legitimate empire which is always less terrible than the yoke which they give to themselves in their fatal liberty. You no longer see a girl proud of her dowry seem to grant a favor to the husband whom she accepts. Every man takes care of the woman who is the mother of his children, and she, receiving everything from her husband’s hand, is more disposed to fidelity and obedience: the law being universal, no one feels the weight of it. All women, submissive to the duties which their sex impose on them, feel their honor involved in following these austere laws which alone can insure their happiness.’”

She paused here, turned, and threw the book on the table behind her, then faced the audience with her hands folded, her head high, and a look of such scorn on her beautiful face that she seemed a wholly different woman. The languishing eyes no longer said “I love you,” but spoke the bitterest language of contempt. One moment,

there was perfect silence, then the hall burst into applause. I leaned forward, my heart beating fast, my face flushed; the woman was superb. We were applauding her beauty, we had forgotten everything else.

She shook her head, held up her hand imperatively, and we were silent at once.

"You are not applauding that sentiment," she said. "You are applauding what you know to be my utter contempt for it."

We applauded her again, to assure her that she was right. I recognized the extract she had read. It was taken from Mercier's "*Year 2440*." How I wished for Lord Eliot, now!

When the room was silent once more, she continued in a firm, ringing voice that compelled attention:

"How dare any man accuse Nature of his own misconduct, and declare that hers is the law which his own brutal selfishness has made! Where, in all the brute kingdom, and man is but a higher brute who has forgotten his origin, is the female dependent on the male? To which, on the contrary, has Nature allotted the heaviest burden in the great law of interdependence, the law of life? To the weakest, you think? Nature is no blunderer. She never gives her burdens to those who cannot carry them. She never intrusts her most important functions to weakness. She gives them to the swift, to the strong."

Then in a clear, logical way she made her plea for the recognition of the absolute equality of women before the law. She would hear of no compromise. She swept away all social considerations of woman's duties as if they were so many cobwebs in her path. Woman had one paramount duty just now, it was to herself. Man's superiority as a social creature was nothing but a superiority in crass egotism, in brutal audacity. Woman, too, must dare to be free; she bore the yokes of two degrading servitudes, marriage and public opinion. She must break these yokes, prefer hardship and

toil to them. She must prefer the truth, naked, ugly though it be to the prettiest lie. She must make war to the death on the illusions that ensnare and enslave her; and the most fatal of all illusions to her is the illusion of love. Parodying Mme. Roland's apostrophe to liberty, she exclaimed: "O Love, how many crimes and vile abominations have been committed in thy name! Woman in her folly has made a religion of it; she has called it sacred, holy, the supreme joy of life. She has centered all her hopes and aims on it, and, shipwrecked ninety-nine times out of a hundred, sits helpless among her ruins praying for death. Cowards! cowards! Up! up!—dare to live! If love were anything but a transient illusion, one might make a religion of it, but to go from woman to woman and man to man, as from feast to feast, in order to give oneself a state of delirium, or intoxication, is the height of folly and crime. Nature never designed a life of activity for man and of dreaming passivity for woman; at bottom, men and women have the same desire for freedom of choice and action, the same delight in the full expansion and play of the mind, and the same constitutional tastes and impulses. It is not Nature but artificial custom which has excluded woman from any world but that of the emotions. This exclusion, this restriction of action, lies at the bottom of shipwrecked marriages, morbid and hysterical moods, and all the social tragedies in which woman appears as a factor. Let women have courage to destroy this poison of love so sweet to taste, so bitter to drink. You are loved to-day, flattered to the skies. Who can venture to say that you will not be hated to-morrow? And motherhood? Yes, that you shall respect, when it is desired. But give no fine names to what is involuntary. Don't make a god of your appetites, and adorning them with tinsel and lace, fall down and worship them. You need not despise them either. Accept them as you accept the law of falling bodies—govern them, don't be governed by them. Slavery is

slavery, no matter who the master be, and of all forms of slavery that is the most degrading which subjects the intellect to appetite."

In this new country and in this day of free thinking, that all sounds very familiar as I write it down; but when I listened that night, much of what this beautiful woman in revolt against society, had to say, came to me with the force of novelty. Young, innocent, inexperienced, woman for me was the mystery of mysteries, something sacred, lifted away above me, and I was shocked and hurt at the rending of that beautiful veil through which youth looks at love. Besides, to tell the truth, all this complaint of man on the part of a woman so beautiful as she, seemed singularly absurd, when she must have known that if she set her heart upon anything, there wasn't a man among us who wouldn't have yielded to her will; and we were not different from other men. In our place they would have done as we did. She swayed us as she pleased, and without believing a word of what she said, we were ready to swear on our honor that she was right. Women tyrannized by men? It seemed to me that, never in my life, had I so plainly seen how a woman can hold a man soul and body, slave to her caprice; never before felt so powerfully the mysterious, irresistible attraction of feminine beauty. When my new acquaintance introduced me to her as his cousin, at the close of the assembly, I stammered my compliments like a bashful schoolboy. And yet she did not in any way reach my ideal of womanhood incarnated in Lady Margaret; she did not, in the least, blur for me the sweet face that I revered; but she touched me; she made me restless; she made me unhappy; she made me feel myself a raw boy who had dreamed and not lived as yet; she set me to wishing, to hoping, and so far from discouraging me by her denunciation of love, she made me feel that it was the one thing in life worth while.

Of course, I lost no time in relating my experience

to Lord Eliot, and he immediately expressed a wish to meet these two cousins. I communicated his desire to my new acquaintance, who felt very much flattered, and a day was set for the introduction. It turned out to be a cold, gloomy December day, the air dark with the crossing of snow-flakes, the wind blowing sharply and howling down the chimney like a wild beast. We had a roaring fire in the drawing-room, and were sitting near it when the visitors were announced.

In speaking of Mlle C—— to Lord Eliot, I had not dwelt on her beauty, but had contented myself with saying that she was fine-looking. But this day she was magnificent. The sharp air had brought a vivid color to her cheeks, and her beautiful black eyes sparkled with health and vigor. She brought with her the fresh pure air of out of doors to revive the heavy air of the house. We had not spoken for some time before her entrance, and Lord Eliot, sunk in a profound reverie, had not lifted his eyes until her arrival. I shall never forget the sudden change in his face when his eyes first met hers. He paled, he reddened, and passed his hands over his face as if to conceal his change of color—then he looked at her again and smiled. In recalling the scene, I have often thought that their meeting resembled that of two souls that belonged to each other who were seeing each other again for the first time, after many days. All the virility of this feeble and delicate body seemed to say, "This is what I need. Here is the health that will share its superabundance with me. Here is the beauty that will delight me every day, anew. Here is that warm feminine sympathy that will lessen my pain in sharing it;" for my astonished and observant eyes had remarked a change almost as great in the young woman's face. The air of cold indifference which she had shown towards her companions on the memorable night in which I had first seen her, was replaced by a manner full of gentleness and solicitude. She approached him as a

mother approaches a beloved child; for there is in the love of a woman, when it is profound and durable, a mysterious element of maternity; she wishes to caress and to care for him whom she loves, she would spare him the lightest grief; but alas! this love so perfect, so disinterested, lacks what to so many men is, in the long run, the charm of love—the piquant spur of hazard, of doubt. Most men will love long, only what they fear to lose; and jealousy, doubt, nay, at times, despair are the food of their affection.

Do I speak too soon of love between these two who had never before met? No; there is a love born of the first chance meeting of the eyes. Ask the reason of it, it can only reply, by saying like Montaigne:

“Si on me presse de dire pourquoi je l’aimais, je sens que cela ne se peut exprimer qu’en répondant, parce que c’était lui; parce que c’était moi.”

These two couldn’t have answered otherwise than that: “Because it was he, because it was I.”

There was in both of them the same capacity for generous enthusiasm, the same courage, and if it were necessary, the same audacity, the same strength of will, the same intensity of feeling. For I had not been misled by the bitterness with which she spoke of love; for just as cynicism is often the outcome of the most unbounded confidence in humanity, after that confidence has been deceived and betrayed, so a woman’s rejection of love as a necessary element of her happiness, is the result of some bitterness in her experience that has left her wounded for having too much leaned on that frail support. But no one, not even the cynic, is always proof against a return of confidence and affection. This woman stood before Lord Eliot, now, devouring with her eyes his magnificent head; and he was just as much absorbed in her. For neither of them did there exist another person in the world, at that moment. He was the first to speak.

“You are very courageous to brave the storm,” he

said, extending his hand, something which he very rarely did. "Sit down near the fire; you must be cold."

"Not at all," she answered, and her sonorous musical voice seemed to fill the room with something very fresh and sound. "Not at all. I like the cold, I like a storm, I like anything that calls out strength and resistance in me. It makes me feel alive."

She reddened, as if involuntarily she might have made him feel the weakness of his body in contrast with the vigor of her own, and added, "I am very sure that you understand me."

"Yes, I do; and I can understand also how you can often be in revolt against the laws of society."

"Yes, my lord," she answered gently, "against the laws of *society*, never against the laws of *nature*. I am not so stupid as to suppose that by willing we can alter one of them; therefore, nothing is left but to submit."

"But are we living now in a state of *nature*?"

"We are millions of miles from it."

"And you would like to return to it?"

"If you mean by a state of *nature* a state of savagery, I answer 'no,' of course; but if you mean a condition in which the laws of *society* are in harmony with the laws of *nature*—then, 'yes' emphatically."

"And do you find that history has ever left us an account of such a condition among men?"

"No, my lord, that remains to be experienced; and to hasten its approach is the duty of the present and near future."

"And you believe in the realization of it in a remote future?"

"Why not?"

"I really can't exactly tell, Mademoiselle. I know nothing of the world, and I am just nineteen. That is the age of illusions, they tell us. But fate has nailed me to a chair. That has given me time to reflect, that has aged me; and when you reply with such sunny confidence, I seem to myself to be a hundred years old,

and, pardon me, Mademoiselle, I always speak with abominable frankness to those whom I like—you seem to me to be nineteen."

I wish I could put into these words, as I write them, the inexpressible sweetness of his voice, shaded with a little teasing note of irony, and the striking beauty of his manly face softened by something tender and full of gaiety that shone out of his dark eyes. How proud I was of him! How I loved him! O my master! my friend!

She laughed, thrust her hand through the soft masses of *her* hair, shaking her head with a little gesture of disagreement.

"My lord, as a woman, I ought to be flattered to be taken for nineteen at twenty-eight, but I am not; and, pardon me, it is you who are young, very young; and I who am old, old, old as the wrongs that oppress us. Listen seriously, I beg of you. There are a thousand things we women wish for, because our lives are artificial: there is only one thing we need, and that is liberty—the breath of life, a free space in which the mind can develop without being stunted. The past envelops us like a shroud, and we stifle in it. We must think over again its thoughts, repeat its actions, its words. If we dare change our opinions ever so little, persecution commences, if not with open violence, then with covert sneer; and it falls the heaviest on the weakest socially, the women and the poor."

Her eyes shone, her cheeks glowed.

"For us women in particular there is a great specter set up before our eyes as you set up a scarecrow in a wheat field. Do you know what it is? It is the *womanly woman!*" What an accent of contempt in these last words! What a superb expression of disdain in her beautiful features! "And do you know what that means? It means that she is to be the slave of man, or else the pretty plaything of his leisure, whom he will love passionately one day and tire of, perhaps loathe, the day following."

"Pardon me, Mademoiselle," said my young lord quickly, "of all women whom I have ever met, you have the least right to complain of slavery, you who could enslave when you liked——"

She tossed back her head with a proud air.

"Do you mean that I am beautiful? O yes. I have been called beautiful—you said a moment ago that you spoke frankly to those whom you like. I, too, speak frankly, not only to those whom I like, but to everyone, when it is necessary. I know that I can easily make myself loved, as you call it; but is it *I* that am loved, or my dark hair, my complexion, and the contour of my face? If the small-pox were to blur my features and dim my eyes, do you think I should be loved? When old age withers me, do you think I shall be respected? Do you think that I shall count for anything but a supernumerary in this Christian land that doesn't strangle its girls at birth, but lets them grow up with the boys? Love! Men do not know the meaning of the word. Woman has no meaning to them except as a beautiful body. What do they care for the soul of her—except as it is willing to take all its color from them? But don't you know that a love which does not root itself below surfaces cannot live, and that viewed in this way we are destined always to be at the mercy of your caprice?"

"Perhaps you are right, but aren't you attempting here to change a law of nature that in the long run you will be forced to submit to? We are born to love beauty just as we are born to breathe the air. And perhaps under that instinct lies a fine principle of race preservation and progress—who knows? The soul can't show itself on the surface, and often it wouldn't if it could. Haven't you feelings and thoughts so intimate, so peculiarly personal that to speak of them would be to profane them? There is a modesty of the soul as sensitive, as tremulous, as that of the body."

"I quite agree with you in that, my lord; and it may

be that I am quarreling with a law of nature and that it is impossible for men to regard us in any other light than that of their chief source of pleasure; but still, I think I may legitimately complain that you persistently shut us out from the sphere of your intellectual conquests, and condemn us to ignorance, preferring a thousand times that we should be imbeciles, but coquettish and frivolous, rather than real companions, capable of walking side by side with you. I am fair enough, too, to confess that a great many women, the majority it may be, are too often quite content with their kingdom of the flesh and try to strengthen it with all the artifice in their power. But if you were to demand of them solider attractions than these frail charms, they would answer by giving you what you asked, and so become infinitely more useful to the race. You make us feeble, egotistic, base with all the meanness of jealousy, envy, and deceit. You take away all legitimate power from us, in denying us the rights of citizenship; and you force us to use craft and cunning in their place. A man, all his life long, may count on your respect and affection. A woman ceases to exist for you after forty. Give us also the life of intelligence—grant us the dignity of meaning something to the government at any age after the dawn of reason. Respect our old age. Don't force us to risk all our happiness and dignity on the frail bark of love where shipwreck is inevitable; and do not despise us, if fate should deny us even the chance at shipwreck which you make the supreme end of a woman's existence. You have covered the name of old maid with ridicule and contempt, and thus forced thousands of women to sell themselves to escape it, because they hadn't the courage to face an honorable life alone. Forgive me, I see that I have shocked you. I have talked too much, but I feel too keenly on this subject to speak with indifference or with brevity."

My lord, in listening to her, had changed color more than once, and an expression of real pain lay on his

face at the close of her speech. He passed his white hand over his face a moment, then lifting his eyes and looking at her with a smile almost apologetic, he said:

"You may have reason to say what you do. I have never thought of these things. For me, woman has been my mother and my sister; that is to say, love and devotion incarnate, the sun and the dew of my life. Woman, otherwise, fate forbids me to think of. If I have sometimes vaguely dreamed of that love of which the poets speak, it has been as if I had dreamed of the stars; and my eyes, dazzled and blinded for a moment, have quickly come back to earth again, where I am destined to crawl painfully all my life. But"—his voice, low and hesitating until now, suddenly grew stronger, and a sparkle of magnificent audacity brightened his eyes as he went on—"I must tell you fearlessly that if fate had been kind to me and had given me the health and strength that ought to have been my birthright, I should have loved like a man, and not like a schoolmaster;—that is to say, I should have felt powerfully that irresistible unstable attraction of beauty you contemn. I should have quitted Minerva for Venus. And don't you see why? We need to be awakened out of stagnation from time to time by a sudden shock that sets all the chords of our being to vibrating again; we need new sources of sensation, new horizons of thought; and beauty often awakens us to life again, as not even wisdom herself can do. I can understand, now, how a man might say to some woman whose beauty was to him like a revelation: 'I never lived but half until I saw you: you have given me eyes and ears and a tongue to express the perfect sweetness of life in your presence. What more do I need now that I love you?' Didn't Dante feel a *vita nuova* after his first meeting with Beatrice?"

He leaned forward towards her, his face glowing as I had never seen it; she drew back a little, and I saw her eyes grow moist as she said with a little catch in

her voice and an accent of maternal sweetness that made her adorable:

“Ah, you *are* young, and I do not wish you to think that I never knew the illusions that belong to youth, and so I am going to tell you that if ever I had received from any man the proof of a sincere and intimate sympathy with what is best in me, I shouldn’t have become the declamatory public woman you have just listened to. I, too, might have been the sun and dew in the life of another, as you so prettily express it, if—but O, what folly to talk like this! You make me weak; or rather you show me how weak I am—” She rose from her chair and began to adjust her cloak about her shoulders. He extended his hand eagerly towards her, saying:

“Don’t go yet, I beg of you. I still have something to say to you, if you can spare me the time. Am I keeping you from any duty?”

“No, my lord, my time is yours. If you have anything to say to me, I shall gladly listen.”

She resumed her seat, flinging her cloak from her shoulders, and looked at him expectantly. He hesitated a moment, as if he were searching for some pretext to keep her longer. Finally, he took up the conversation impersonally, by remarking:

“You have given me some new ideas, and I shall need some time to think them over. I should like to ask you what remedy you propose for these evils of which you speak. You have already said that you did not hope to change nature.”

“No, my lord, but we hope to change the attitude of woman herself with regard to the opinions of which she is the victim. We hope to teach her to respect herself, even when she has forfeited the respect of society. Women of genius have always done it. Why should there be one law for them, and another for women who have no eloquence but that of the heart? We hope to give her courage. That is what she lacks.

She is the slave of fashion, the slave of superstition, the slave of illusions with regard to love; and for that reason she lives in a state of cowardly fear—and the most ignoble kind of fear, fear to lose her fair skin and the gloss of her hair. Look at the so-called woman's page in our periodicals and see what is the chief occupation of their thoughts;—the cut of their clothes, complexion washes and hair dyes, and the petty regulations of artificial society. There are times when I am ashamed to be a woman because of this seemingly hopeless childishness and silliness. But do you think that we are naturally absolutely devoid of good sense and intelligence? I do not believe it. Why, then, do we seem to have lost it all? Simply because we have been crowded out of all the work of society, and relegated to one task alone, that of pleasing you men, and thus securing the privilege of being taken care of, dressed, clothed, and flattered by you."

"Then you would like to see women admitted to all the professions, enter the business world and share with man all the labor that belongs to social organization—build houses, clear forests, pave roads, and sit in the councils of the government?"

"Yes, my lord."

"Mademoiselle, we have in our language the beautiful word '*home*.' That means a '*chez vous*', a little personal retreat where a man, a woman, and their children make a little kingdom all their own. In this kingdom, each individual can exercise his peculiar tastes; and here the woman is the pivot around which everything turns. While the man works outside to keep up this kingdom, she has the leisure to adorn herself with all the ornaments of the mind, if she wishes to. She can become for him the measure of taste, an inspiration towards the ideal. Isn't that a rôle in civilization as important as any that he plays? Tell me frankly, do you mean to substitute for this home those soulless colossal boarding-houses, or *phalanstères*, as

Fourier calls them? I would rather be brought up in a foundling asylum. Nay, look here; a thought has just occurred to me. In the progress of humanitarianism—there will come a time when men will feel that these big asylums are too spacious to lodge children in, that they shrink and shiver there in the most pitiful of all isolations, the isolation of a crowd; and that to be properly brought up, they should be divided into little families, housed under separate roofs. And they *will* be so housed. Progress does not lie in the direction of communism; that lies behind us. We have passed out of it into individualism. The home, the sweetness of family life is the chief mark of a higher civilization."

" My lord, you are looking at life through some very pretty illusions. You are discussing dreams, not realities. Marriage *ought* to be what you think it is, but it is not; unfortunately it is anything but the happy state of perpetual inspiration that you depict. It is oftener an unspeakable wretchedness, when it is not an unspeakable vileness. But as long as there is youth and warm blood, there will be marriages; as to just what form they will take, I am not prepared to say. But what I *am* prepared particularly to say is this, that no marriage bond ought to exist which gives all the advantages to a man. A woman ought not to be compelled by circumstances, as she is at present, to continue an unholy relation because she can find no protection outside of it. She should not be compelled to perpetuate a mistake once made. Life is growth. It is not the sinking inevitably into error and dying in it. The poor, also, ought not to be condemned as they are to the ceaseless gloom of poverty. The pride and avarice of man have divided society into two great classes, the rich and the poor. To the one all the pleasure, the glory of civilization; to the other, all the toil and darkness."

" Excuse me, Mademoiselle; a few moments ago you were complaining that men had appropriated all the

tasks of civilization, leaving to women the degradation of leisure; for leisure seemed to you to amount to that, and you spoke of labor as a privilege which resulted in the superior education and position of men. But just now, in speaking of class-division, you seem to regard labor as a badge and instrument of inferiority, and you make idleness a desirable condition. I have not properly understood you, I am sure, and you can explain away this apparent contradiction."

"Yes, my lord," she answered tranquilly, "you have not properly understood me; or, rather, I have expressed myself badly. I do not at all mean to say that idleness is an advantage, a condition of superiority. On the contrary, it is the very essence of vice and degeneracy. Can the absence of responsibility and the ceaseless search for pleasure ennable anyone? Can you make a day holy by doing nothing in it? But on the other hand, if the whole life is nothing else but an anxious effort to supply the needs of the body, food, clothes, shelter—the man is brutalized by labor. Now society ought not to condemn a soul to perish of idleness, on the one hand, or to die crushed under the weight of toil. The soil, like light and air, belong to us all alike. It is the common source of independence; and selfishly to take possession of it to the exclusion of others who have as much right to it, is the first of social crimes."

"I have no doubt, Mademoiselle, that what we call social progress is founded upon an immense amount of brutal selfishness, and that we all ought to try to reduce it to its minimum. But I do not believe that it can ever be wholly eliminated, or that we shall ever reach a condition of social equality which will wipe out poverty and suffering. Such a belief seems to me to be founded upon two capital errors; first, that we are all born equal, and, second, that conditions determine character. As to the first, suppose we were all to be farmers on a small scale, as you suggest, do you think that I could make so much as a spear of grass grow? And

I am not the only one whom nature has condemned to inferiority, as witness our asylums and hospitals. I could find it in my heart to curse her for not giving me a beautiful body full of health and vigor like yours. But *à quoi bon?* All my efforts, all my prayers could not help me to drag myself to the window, yonder. And as for conditions: if you were to make me king of France, I couldn't even mount my throne unaided. But grant, even, that this dream of social equality and perpetual sunshine were practicable, I am afraid we should all say with Voltaire: '*C'est une belle chose que la tranquilité. Oui, mais l'ennui est de sa connaissance et de sa famille.*' What a frightful monotony, if we all thought exactly alike, and all did the same things! Bah! we should be reduced to sleep and silence for want of a living interest. The oak is a noble tree, I like it better than all the others; but I shouldn't like it to be the only tree. I couldn't give up my willows and elms and beeches and pines and all the others. They give to a landscape that pretty variety which makes the charm of it. The sunlight is beautiful, but we seek the shade with gratitude at times, and are thankful for the coolness and darkness of night. Virtue would not shine so brightly if not contrasted with vice. Perfect virtue everywhere would mean stagnation. Perfect happiness is an empty dream."

"And yet, my lord, you do not hesitate to dream it for another life if not this one, and call it heaven."

"Excuse me, Mademoiselle," he replied with a mischievous smile. "I do not dream that way, either. That is the dream of apathetic souls. My paradise would be action, action, difficulties to conquer—stumbling, falling and rising again, but ever onward, onward!"

"How easy it must be to talk like that with no difficulties to conquer, with the future assured! Do you think then that physical pain is necessary to the enjoyment of perfect health?"

"I cannot tell, 'Mademoiselle. I have never known perfect health. I have only suffered."

"And I, too, my lord. I have never seen life on its beautiful side. I know it on all sides but that—the side of toil and difficulty and want—and so I dream of that other side which I do not know; I dream of its being realized here on earth, and I do not think I am apathetic either."

"That is to say, we finish our argument as we began it, each holding his own opinion still. But really you have given me something to think about."

"And you also have set me to thinking, and I hope, I hope——" She rose again, hesitating, reaching for her cloak and blushing like a young girl.

"That we shall meet again?" he said, holding out his hand. "Ah, that would give me such great pleasure."

CHAPTER IX

THE OLD, OLD PATHWAY, JUST WIDE ENOUGH FOR TWO

THEY met again a great many times; but singularly enough, he rarely if ever talked to me about her, and I understood his reticence perfectly. Is it possible to speak of one whom we deeply love in the first days of that sweet intoxication which creates the world anew for us? Such a love seems to be profaned the hour in which we can speak of it, even to the loved ones. During these first months of their friendship, there was something like ecstasy in his entire mien, a smile singularly beautiful, an inexplicable lighting up of the whole face, an unaccustomed sweetness in the voice—all betrayed the intensity of his emotional life. He spoke very little, he dreamed a great deal, and his reveries were evidently full of charm.

I do not know how to explain it, but in proportion as he seemed to live fuller and deeper in joy, I grew sadder and sadder. This new emotion was the first sentiment of my young master that I had not shared, and it seemed to make me no longer necessary to his happiness; and threw me more and more upon myself. I felt for the first time the terrible loneliness of abandonment. And yet he had not at all abandoned me. I was present at all the interviews between him and Mlle C—. Neither was I wholly insensible to her charms. But my heart was filled with the image of another. The ideal woman for me was all sweetness, all gentleness: not strong enough to stand quite alone in the world, but needing to lean where strength is; and I would have wished to be that strength. But in Mlle C— I felt something superior to myself, and

where is the man, not effeminate, who loves triumphant superiority in woman?

In my young lord she had found a will as strong as her own—and an intelligence much broader and finer, and better trained. She never for a moment seemed to me his equal, and yet I thought her a very superior woman. But I distrusted her influence over him. I felt vaguely that there had been in her life some terrible experience which had completely disillusioned her, destroyed her faith in man, and left her nothing but an immense pride and ambition, and a broken power of affection, wounded, sensitive and not destined to make happy those on whom it was lavished.

Now that the years have given me a perspective and I can see in their true relations all the incidents of my life, and through them can judge the lives of others, I look back, and I seem to see in this woman the incarnate spirit of revolt which characterizes the women of our century. It has been called pre-eminently a sceptical, material age: men have turned from revelation to observation, and have destroyed with needless fury the articles of faith in defense of which they once destroyed each other. The microscope has superseded the supernatural; mind is a property of matter, one of the countless manifestations of motion, and the emotions are subjected to an analysis as curious as that of matter. But none of them has suffered so much by this analysis as the passion of love. Idealized by women and poets as something divine, it has been degraded to a mere appetite disguised by countless coquettices, a short-lived hunger, destined inevitably to satiety if satisfied, and capable of innumerable re-awakenings for different objects. Such an idea is fatal to the happiness of women. What! make so fickle and transitory a passion the basis of one's happiness for life! To live from hand to mouth like a beggar, never sure that the caresses received to-day will not change to curses to-morrow, who for a moment could endure such a destiny? The pain, the bitterness

of this disillusionment colors deeply the literature of our age. It has given us a literature of hysteria, a literature of the human beast triumphing over the traditions of culture; an apotheosis of instinct over reason, in which a return to barbarism is declared to be the direct road to progress. In this literature, the sneer of the debauchee passes for wit, his audacity for courage, and the odors of the cesspools which he uncovers are sniffed as greedily as if they were the spices of Arabia. But this cannot always last; and when society seems ready to die of rottenness, her disease will be recognized, stringent remedies will be applied, and virtue will once more be recognized as health and sanity.

I have said that I was always present at the interviews between my lord and Mlle C——. They were accustomed to meet two or three times a week, oftenest at our lodgings; but when the beautiful spring days made it a pleasure to be out of doors, they often met in the Bois de Boulogne. There was a beautiful little grove of oaks near a pond at some little distance from the most frequented paths, and this was their favorite rendezvous. A light low carriage had been especially built for Lord Eliot's use. The main body of it was curved in such a fashion that he could half recline at his ease in it, and the coachman's box could seat two people quite comfortably. But he preferred me to drive him alone to these meetings with Mlle C——, and liked me to remain with them during their conversation; sometimes I was even invited to take my part in it, but much oftener I was a silent listener, and sooner or later quite forgotten by them. Sometimes I took a book with me and read or strolled about in sight of the carriage, but beyond hearing.

Their conversations were often playful, mere youthful fun bubbling over from both of them, but sometimes very earnest and always sincere. Perhaps without realizing it themselves, each was modifying the opinions of the other. She was growing less and less dogmatic and

declamatory, and he more and more penetrating and more indulgent in his views of men and their relations to each other. She found in him a precocious, clear-sighted intelligence which a physical infirmity had not weakened, but rather sharpened, by adding to it a keen sensitiveness. I have often since compared him mentally to Leopardi, whom he much resembled in his gifts and in his infirmities; and if he never reflected the poet's pessimism in his language, I am not sure that it was never in his thoughts. But a certain indomitable pride—a fine perception of the full extent of the beautiful significance of the phrase "*noblesse oblige*," would have made him feel that pessimism is an involuntary revelation of inner wretchedness. We are all optimists in the sunny days of youth and health.

And to him, she was woman in her most dangerous, seductive form. I shall never forget her one particular afternoon in early summer, when the air was filled with the music of birds and the odors of flowers. We had arrived the first at the little grove, something which rarely happened. It was then that I noticed in my young master something feverish and agitated, quite unlike his usual calm. A little shiver passed over his body from time to time, and I noticed that his arms sometimes twitched convulsively. Whether he was suffering physically or mentally I could not make out, for I dared not observe him closely, without betraying my anxiety. He spoke with unaccustomed haste, addressed questions to me and did not wait for me to reply, but continued to talk upon one indifferent subject or another, evidently trying to escape some fixed idea that tormented him. I resolved not to leave him this afternoon, lest he might be seized with a paroxysm of suffering. My heart bled for him. I would willingly have given him all my strength and taken his infirmity upon myself had it been possible. My mind hurried forward to meet the woman whose coming was to bring him joy. Would she notice, as I did, that he was not quite

himself? Would she be gentle with him, as she knew so well how to be, or would she be capricious and teasing? And while I was wondering, I saw the flutter of her white dress through the trees, and in a moment she was with us, so beautiful, so fresh, so radiant with health, that she seemed to make a circle of light about her. She did not seat herself as usual on the bench near the carriage, but came quite close to him, remaining standing. She had a book with a yellow paper binding in her hand.

"What have you there?" asked Lord Eliot, noticing it at once.

I often observed that they almost always met in this way, without exchanging any formal greeting. It was as if they had never been separated. One day he said a pretty thing to me that explained it all.

"Do you know that there may be moments in our relations with those we love, when we leave them to be nearer to them? Absent, they are all our own. We hold them so near, so near to us. They say only what we wish to hear, and we say nothing to them which we wish afterwards unsaid. We understand each other so perfectly in these solitary meetings of the fancy, that the reality is sometimes deadly cold in comparison."

He did not know how well I understood him, and how often of late I had left *him* to be nearer to him.

She smiled at his question and held out the volume to him, and he read aloud its title:

"*Poésies complètes de Alfred de Musset.*" He changed color, and frowned.

"Why do you read such stuff as that?"

She took back the book, turned over its leaves carelessly, and answered:

"Because he is talked of now, and because future centuries will talk of him, and say that he represents the mental attitude of his age in its aspiration and its despair. You don't believe that, of course."

"No, I don't believe it. He represents neither you

nor me, nor the little world in which we each live, nor the bigger world in which the great mass of men toil and think. And thank God he doesn't. I should despair of the future, and you ought to despair of it, too, if he represented us. He represents no one but himself and those like him who try to find happiness in debauchery and fall to whining because they can't find it there. Do you think that we are all such cowards that we cannot accept the disillusionments of life without ever finding anything better to do than to sob and cry over them like children who have broken their china dolls?"

"But if it is a poet who weeps? If the sobs are rhythmical and melodious? Aren't you just a little bit hard on the artistic temperament?"

"Artistic temperament! What do you mean by that? Perpetual infancy? Impotence with regard to reality? The power to see nothing, feel nothing, know nothing outside of the little imaginary world of which you are the center? I know nothing so wickedly selfish and cruel and so absolutely useless as that. I respect the dream world of the opium-eater a thousand times more than the dream world of the idealist; for it knows itself for what it is; it calls itself by the right name; while the other gives itself out for all sorts of fine things and seduces poor fools to believe in it to their everlasting misfortune and unhappiness. It is insanity calling itself wisdom, disease passing itself off for health, filth and nastiness covering itself with tinsel and perfume, and shouting 'How clean I am! How sweet I smell!' No! the great artists of the world have been made of stronger fiber than that. They have had superb courage. They didn't go on blowing bubbles to the end of their life, hoping to find one at last that would be solid enough to take hold of. They turned to what *is* solid, they touched it, rested on it, found it good. They reported of what *is* as well as of what ought to be, and we go on reading their reports to the end of our days;

but what man of sound judgment and clean life could read Alfred de Musset after forty?"

"But you—you are not forty; you are twenty. Have you no idea of what love is?"

She was standing very near him, the warm color surging over her beautiful face. He looked at her a long time without answering, looked at her unflinchingly and then said in a quiet voice which sounded cold, but back of which I felt the iron will mastering the feelings within him:

"I have some idea, but to me love is as far from debauchery as sunlight from lamplight."

"And yet nine men out of ten would not understand you, but will understand Musset very well. It is here that *you* are an idealist."

"What pleasure do you get from torturing me in this way?"

"Does it torture you? I did not know that. You have said to me many a time that you loved the truth, preferred it, no matter how naked and ugly, to the most beautiful illusion, sparkling with specious ornaments. Do you really?"

"Without question."

She turned her eyes away, looking dreamily before her; then, as if a sudden thought had occurred to her, she turned to him eagerly, saying:

"I am going to put that question in a more particular form. Imagine that you have a friend whom you have adorned with all the beautiful qualities of your own generous mind. Would you rather know that these qualities had no other foundation than the blindness of your friendship, or would you prefer to prolong this illusion for your own happiness and contentment?"

"I should wish to know the truth."

"And if the friendship were destined to die by this revelation?"

He was very white as he answered:

"Then it must die. I want no happiness built over

an abyss slightly bridged by illusions. I want to worship no creature made by my own hands. The truth at any price. I think we should hesitate a long time before doubting, but once absolutely sure that our friends have been faithless to us or are unworthy of us, I think we should cut them out of our lives as fearlessly as we cut off a gangrened limb and never count the cost in pain or crippling, though we must go maimed through life for it. I hope I know how to suffer in silence like a man, and not like Musset. Be very sure that I shouldn't call in the world to hear me sob and sniffle, even if I were musical at it."

He threw back his head proudly, his handsome face expressing a supreme contempt, his eyes glowing with a dazzling light.

She looked at him as if fascinated, and then her face lighted up with a sort of superb audacity:

"I shall put you to the proof," she said, in a voice singularly low and firm. Then looking around, her glance fell on me, and with a smile of great sweetness, she said:

"Will you excuse me if I wish to be with Lord L—— a few minutes alone?"

I glanced at my young master, and he slightly nodded his head as a sign of dismissal. I left my seat immediately and walked away. I recall it all now, as if it had happened yesterday; the winding path across which the sunlight lay in broken bars—the violets blooming here and there along its edge, and on my heart the chill shadow of approaching grief. I walked about for an hour or more, before returning, knowing well how quickly the time would pass with them. When I came back I found him alone. He was staring before him with wide, dry eyes, and an expression of immense suffering. I feared he was very ill, but at the first word I uttered, he lifted his hand as a token of silence, and bade me drive him home. I never knew what she said to him; but I have made many conjectures about it. Un-

doubtedly, there had been something in her life which shocked terribly this mind so pure and yet so broad that it was not easily shocked. But whatever it was, he never spoke of it, nor did he ever see her or mention her name to me again. But the blow had struck deep. It sapped his vitality; for nights and nights, I know that he hardly slept at all, and his days were feverish, restless and filled with vain attempts to distract himself from the fixed idea which had become his torment.

CHAPTER X

TRAVELING AGAIN

WE left Paris, going to Switzerland, where the family joined us; we finished the summer on the shores of Lake Geneva, and in autumn went to Naples. Here we began to be seriously alarmed at the increasing weakness of my young master. He seemed to be slowly dying before our eyes without our being able to assign to any definite malady the cause of his condition. I, alone, suspected the truth; but I respected so much the secret of his soul which he could not reveal, that I had not the courage to speak of it, until his condition became really critical. Then I resolved to talk with our tutor about it, for he was still with us, the indispensable companion of our studies and amusements. One morning when Lady Margaret and her mother were especially assiduous about Lord Eliot, I went out with Richard Glenn for a walk. We took the via Tasso, climbing the heights, from which we had a magnificent view of the bay and the city. We passed a little monastery in which a choir of monks were singing together, and we stopped a moment to listen to them. *Molti peccati* was all that we could understand of the song that made the tranquil morning air vibrate sonorously. At the right and above us the terraces were green with vines richly loaded with purple grapes. At last, we entered a road enclosed on either side by high stone walls in the chinks of which wild flowers and ferns were growing, and white and orange-colored butterflies were fluttering about them, looking themselves like flowers endowed with motion. The air was admirably fresh and pure and we felt exhilarated by our walk.

“How I wish Lord Eliot could be with us this morn-

ing," I exclaimed, rather for the purpose of introducing his name and directing the conversation to him, than for anything else.

"Yes, I do, too, but I fear——" he paused and shook his head anxiously and sighed.

"You fear as I do," I returned, "that he is more dangerously ill than we think." Then without more ado, and as simply as I could, I related my fears and suspicions and concluded by asking whether it were possible that an emotion too intense could result in any one's death.

"Certainly," he answered quickly. "In a nature very sensitive joined to a feeble body, a profound emotion can kill like a slow poison. Lord Eliot has this sensitive temperament, this suffering body. Love has come to him with all the intensity of a primitive passion; he has suffered deeply through it, and he will probably die of it. He has a precocious intelligence—and with a strong body, his head would have succeeded in killing his heart; he might have become a cynic like Schopenhauer, or a philosopher of the Goethean type, urbane, moderate, with a large and piercing vision—a sage, the principal need of whose life is to belong to himself as much as possible, while keeping his intelligence alert and awake. But he has not the physical force to throw off the depressing, deadly effect of this sudden withdrawal from his life of all that gave it beauty and meaning. The fact that he has never spoken to you of it is sinister. The man who can talk of his grief is in a fair way to recovery. But he who bleeds inwardly, and will not reveal his wound may die of it. Oh, how cruel, how cruel these hidden wounds are that no eye sees or suspects, and yet that break the springs of life in us, robbing the sun of his light and the cheerful earth of her verdure. But few men or women of any capacity for deep feeling pass through life without some such experience. Nature, with her one inevitable purpose, is at work within us all; but we do not always

understand the meaning of this restless tenderness that fills us with visions and longings. We can't see deeper than surfaces, and beauty takes the place of everything; we have only one real need at twenty. It is to love and to be loved. A scorching thirst devours us, and if we cannot find a pure, clear spring, we stoop to wet our parched lips at the first pool of dirty water that we find along the highway. A common nature will feel no repugnance at this; but for a refined, superior nature, nothing is so degrading, so humiliating as to have lavished the best treasures of the heart on a low, unworthy object. And I have one counsel to give you: If in loving you have still some power to choose, and are not the victim of a blind instinct, love what is above you and not what is below; and if you are destined to be unhappy at least some nobleness will be mingled with your grief. You will be lifted, purified by it, not degraded. A love like that will not kill. You may be struck down, but it will be to rise again. You will not despise yourself for having taken tinsel for gold. You will feel rather a noble pride that it was permitted to you to see the highest and love it passionately."

I felt my blood driven back to my heart, then surge to the surface in floods of color. Did he guess my secret?

"Can't you speak to him?" I asked in an unsteady voice, "and win, in some way, his confidence, so that he can rid himself of this burden?"

"No," he answered, "it is too late; I should have anticipated the result of this connection long ago, and broken it off. But I was deceived by his wonderful self-control, by the clearness and coolness of his head, and the fact that, from his childhood, women have made much of him and so destroyed his impressionability by familiarity. But one can no more reason with passion than with hunger and thirst or any other physical necessity. It can be killed, though, by supplanting it with another passion. Happily, he has a keen and large

intelligence. He is easily interested in everything worthy of attention. The situation of this beautiful Italy has touched him. Let us try to sharpen his interest. Let us manage an introduction of the heads of the Liberal party to him. I believe that I can bring about an audience with Mazzini, or rather with one of his most intimate friends who shares all his opinions —a brilliant, big-hearted fellow who happens just now to be in Naples."

"Do you know Mazzini himself?"

"O yes, very well. I met him for the first time at London a few years ago. He had established there an association of workmen, and during the summer vacations I made it my particular business to attend their meetings to hear Mazzini talk. I never met any one who was altogether so wise and just a friend of the laborer as he was. But his own mind, so delicate, so broad, probably exaggerated the possibility of awakening in the ordinary man those elevated sentiments which make the real distinction between the vulgar and the noble. I never met any man with a purer, more disinterested love for his fellow-man. He loved the workmen far too well to flatter them, or to excite their envy against the rich. He never left off telling them that their real happiness and distinction depended upon what they were in themselves and not in their possessions; that dress, rich and abundant food, fine buildings, and all the external appearances of luxury could not elevate them one inch. He knew very well that it is difficult, perhaps impossible, as he said, to make a source of inspiration in morality alone without a dogma or a heaven to support it; but he never ceased to show the inapproachable beauty of perfect virtue as the finest of the old masters taught it, that is to say, virtue which proposes no other aim than itself. To do right not because it is expedient, not because it will bring its reward, but because it *is* right, was the inflexible basis of his code of ethics. Therefore, he never baited his moral pr-

cepts with sugar plums to make them go down the easier. On the contrary, he said: 'Do right without thinking of the consequences. Learn to suffer with courage. The aim of life is *not* happiness, it is development. Keep on growing broader, better. Rain is as essential to growth as sunlight. Life is duty; if duty is agreeable, so much the better, but if your tears must flow as you do it, do it just the same, and weep, if that solaces you.' I think I can recall the exact words of one of his stirring sentences. Here it is: 'Whether the sun shine with the serene splendor of an Italian morn, or the leaden, corpse-like hue of the northern mist, I cannot see that it changes our duty.' Magnificent words, aren't they? I used to come away from his talks feeling singularly rested and lifted; and though the heavy London fog choked the streets, the night seemed full of stars. He had beautiful things, too, to say of love. He hadn't dragged his ideals through filth with loose living. He had no sneers for chastity, and he complained that modern writers have degraded love in persistently searching for sensuality as the basis of it. Woman, he said, has been degraded to the *female*, and he wished that women, laying aside their frivolity and vanity, would search in man for what is noble in him to encourage and support it, and that love between them should be the two wings to bear them toward the ideal. But he didn't make a fetich of love; he was no *femmelette*, he was a man, and he called love a flower that blooms along the pathway of life, but said that it could not change duty. His own life was beautiful with renunciation of it. His country called him, and he could not stop to gather the flower that grew in his pathway; but he did not tread on it scornfully and brutally; he stepped aside and carried the memory of its beauty with him till the end of his life."

Thus chatting, we walked on, stopping sometimes to examine a new flower, or to express our joy in a new glimpse of the beautiful landscape.

Succeeding in his plan, our tutor had very soon drawn into Lord Eliot's circle the most brilliant and most celebrated young patriots of Italy who happened at that time to be staying in Naples. In their suite were other young men of noble birth, attracted not so much by Lord Eliot's personality as by the remarkable beauty of his sister, Lady Margaret. Among them was a young marquis—with many superficial showy accomplishments, a handsome but empty head, a cold heart, a great deal of egotism and a sensual temperament, by virtue of which he was par excellence what is called a ladies' man. He knew admirably how to address himself to the most vulnerable point in a woman's vanity—the wish to believe herself of paramount influence in the life of a man; and made her believe that his tastes, his character, his destiny depended on her alone. He was a fluent talker of the thousand flattering little personalities so dear to the heart of a woman, and knew how to render all the little services and attentions which a pretty woman expects. Now the character of Don Juan has never seemed to me anything but contemptible, and the man who boasts of being a lady-killer seems to me on a par with the hunter who should boast of his prowess in a zoölogical garden where he could kill a caged lion with the butt of his gun. Most women are as easy game to a man who can flatter and lie, as tame barn-yard fowl. They fly into his hands in both cases. He couldn't help catching them if he would, yet most Don Juans classify themselves with the Cæsars and Bonapartes, and think that the easy capture of a woman's heart is equal to the taking of a citadel. They forget that there is a decided difference in the conditions. The first business of the average woman is to be captured. She wishes to be taken care of, to be settled for the future, and capitulates with gratitude. The first business of a beleaguered city is *not* to be taken, and she resists till death and famine open her gates.

It is not necessary to say, then, that the young marquis was violently antipathetic to me and he was none the less so to Lord Eliot; but alas! so low as he fell in our favor, so high did he rise in the esteem of Lady Margaret. She was at this time in the full splendor of her fresh, young beauty, to the charm of which she added a simplicity and grace of manner extremely fascinating. But I noticed that in the presence of the marquis she was agitated and timid, and I cannot describe the shock and pain which this discovery was to me. I had but to look into my own heart to know what that shrinking timidity meant; not that I was such an ass as to believe that I could ever be anything to her but an humble friend and silent adorer, not that I was capable of being jealous of her happiness. No, I could have seen her united to one worthy of her in every way, and could have rejoiced at her promised happiness, and been grateful that she at least had escaped the pain of loving without return. But to see her waste the treasure of her pure and noble heart on a shallow libertine was agony to me.

I had seen this young girl in a thousand amiable situations, yielding her will to her parents or to her brother whom she adored, showing the sweetness and flexibility of her mind under a tutor indulgent but firm; showing also that exquisite delicacy which in a pure, young girl makes us liken her to a flower, all beauty and perfume. I never dared to address her first, I hardly dared even to look at her, so fearful was I that I might betray my love, but secretly I devoured her with my eyes, and there was not a charm of that fresh, young beauty that had escaped me. And yet so exalted, so perfect was my love that it asked nothing in return; and all my joy was to see her, to hear her laugh, to hear her talk. A word, a smile directed to me alone, made me exquisitely happy for days afterwards.

We have so soiled our thoughts of love by searching

the foundation of this sweet flame in the desires of the flesh, that we read Dante with sneering incredulity, and even doubt the reality of this Beatrice who was the inspiration of his life, and make of her a symbol of intellectual perfection. But as for me, thanks to this experience of my early youth, I can read the *Vita Nuova* and feel all the truth of that passion so intense that its white heat has burned out all the smoke and ashes of carnality, and I can sing with the poet:

"Dico quando ella apparià da parte alcuna per la speranza dell'ammirabile salute, nullo nemico mi rimanea; anzi mi giugneva una fiamma di caritade, la quale mi facea perdonare a chiunque m'avesse offeso: e chi allora m'avesse addimandato di cosa alcuna, la mia responsione sarebbe stata solamente Amore, con viso vestito d'umiltà."

She had not her brother's strong and courageous mind, and could not follow him in his bold flights in search of the truth. She trembled face to face with the great questions of scientific research, and turning from them, gladly grasped the loving hand that seemed extended to her from the darkness, saying, "I trust, I believe." She was sensitive to the beautiful in all its forms. She knew human nature only through her own qualities, and was always discovering heroes where there were only borrowed lion's skins. Lord Eliot, teasing her sometimes, told her she was destined, like Titania, to fall in love with an ass's head.

The particular object of her study was art. She hadn't, to be sure, either originality or force enough to make a great artist (what woman has?) but she succeeded admirably in reproducing cheerful, sunny landscapes, a corner of a flowery meadow, a handful of roses, or a delicate, young face like her own.

About this time there was a sort of renaissance of early art, of which the followers have since received the name of pre-Raphaelites. It was a movement backwards instead of forwards, for it wished to re-animate

a faith that science had killed, by making it live again in a form of art that does not belong to our century. But it was especially agreeable to minds filled with reverence for the past and not willing to break with it wholly, and for timid minds distrustful of their powers in a milieu they could not reproduce, and, from a certain romantic turn of mind, could not enjoy.

It is to me a striking proof of the contagious character of taste, that I, who had been at first repelled by the old masters, learned now to love their naïve simplicity and the stammering language in which they told the story of Christian faith and Christian legends; but I know perfectly well that I caught my enthusiasm ready-made from Lady Margaret, and that it grew out of a wish not to fail in seeing beauty and interest where she found so much of it. I was often asked to accompany her to the galleries, and listened in ecstasy to her girlish outbursts of pleasure, and so learned to anticipate her tastes and share them.

CHAPTER XI

COMPLICATIONS

WE remained in Naples until the following spring, when Lord Eliot, seeming to recover sufficiently to travel further without danger, expressed a wish to see Florence, and we all went there, intending to stay some weeks to indulge Lady Margaret's taste for art.

The marquis followed us in a few days, much to the displeasure of Lord Eliot, who, in spite of his cleverness at concealing his feelings, could not, at times, keep from betraying himself by a brusqueness of behavior wholly alien to him. The marquis, on the contrary, was almost obsequious in his efforts to please him, and one afternoon, unable to see Lady Margaret, who was suffering from a headache, insisted on accompanying Lord Eliot and myself to the Pitti Palace.

His insipid comments on the pictures irritated my lord to such an extent that he seemed, at times, to check himself in an outburst of anger, and hardly noticed the masterpieces at which we were looking, until we stood before the celebrated Judith and Holofernes of Cristofano Allori.

It was the first time we had seen it, and I was struck immediately by one of those astounding resemblances as cruel as they are striking, when they recall those once loved whom we are vainly trying to forget. Involuntarily I looked at my young master. His face was the color of ashes, his lips trembled, he breathed with the greatest difficulty. But there was another who was looking with admiration at this beautiful Judith with the fine oval contour of the face and the languid eyes veiled by the drooping lids; and it was upon his face

that my lord's eyes were fixed with an expression of horrible anguish.

"Per Baccho!" exclaimed the marquis. "How is it that beauty like that can cross two centuries and reappear almost identical in a French woman! I assure you, my lord, that I knew at Paris, a young lady——"

"Then it was you!"

Never shall I forget the hoarse voice stifled with passion in which my lord uttered this cry. At the same time, as if the energy of his soul had triumphed once for all over the weakness of his body, he rose to his feet, his hand outstretched as if to smite. But it was for a moment only. He fell back with a sharp cry. The effort had killed him!

O my friend! O my brave heart! Forgive me if these shallow words seem cold. They are not, I am looking at them through my tears. I have never ceased regretting you, never ceased loving you, and I never shall. You cannot die to me, you cannot grow old—and I have said that you should *not all* die while I lived; that what was fine and strong in you should live again in me. But alas! I have not kept the promise. It was grafting on alien stock, and I have borne no fruit. You took away the joy and zest in life by leaving me; and yet I feel challenged not to disappoint you, wholly. I associate you with all that is noblest in human character, and when I am about to despair of men, I think of you and my faith in them revives. I never see anything beautiful, the splendor of the dawn, or of the close of day, that I do not wish you with me. I never read a stirring thought or hear of a noble deed that I do not remember how *you* would have delighted in it; and when I have keenly suffered, I have found some solace in the thought that I, too, was traversing the valley where the shadows hung black and threatening over you, and so could understand you better, love you more. O my friend, I know, now, how you suffered, I know what a crushing grief you bore alone.

Why did you not let me share its bitterness? But no—you would have felt it a crime to diffuse your grief; you would have felt it an unspeakable baseness to reveal anything shameful in the life of one you had loved. The secret of which you died, so far as you were concerned, died with you.

But this woman, Mlle C—, I felt sure, had known all the intoxication of a blind passion, and later, betrayed and abandoned, may have fallen into an irregular and shameful life. Perhaps, at first, she may have designed to make a victim of Lord Eliot, but ended by yielding to the better influence which he unconsciously exerted over all who knew him.

I was as perfectly satisfied in my own mind of the guilt of the marquis as if he had confessed it to me: and what unspeakable anguish it was to me to know that Lady Margaret was exposed to contamination by his daily presence. I must warn her, I must tell her the truth at all hazards. But when? How? It seemed an exquisite cruelty to add to the deep grief she was feeling from her brother's death, the humiliating grief of disillusionment. But to keep silence was crueler by far, for it was the happiness of all her future life that was at stake.

Half mad with grief myself, I neither slept nor ate. We were making hurried preparations for leaving Florence—Lord Eliot's body was being embalmed, and we were to take it back to Scotland with us. I was in my room late in the afternoon—walking up and down, up and down, urged involuntarily to relax, by this restless motion, the agonizing tension of my nerves. Finally I approached the window that looked out upon a garden enclosed with high stone walls. There I saw my lady in close conversation with the marquis. She was weeping bitterly, concealing her face with her handkerchief. He was bending over her, and I saw him seize her hand and carry it to his lips. She made no resistance, and he was about to draw her head down upon his shoulder

when I rushed from the window in an agony of wounded love, and jealousy for her honor, more terrible still. O my God! My God! I could not let this happen. I must save her. There was no one else to do it. I was father, brother, outraged lover at the same time. I rushed downstairs, my brain on fire, through the lower corridor, into the garden, and without excusing myself, I confronted the marquis, crying out:

“How dare you touch that lady’s hand, you infamous scoundrel! Know that I am here to protect her; and if any harm comes to her from you, I shall kill you, as I would crush a snake under my heel.”

He did not understand English well, for in my rage I was master of nothing but my mother tongue; but he could not have misunderstood my frantic gestures and furious expression. However, he hadn’t time to reply to me; because my lady, drawing herself up to her full height and looking at me with withering scorn, said:

“Have you gone stark mad? What do you mean by this insolent intrusion and brutal insult? Get down on your knees, and ask pardon of this gentleman, at once!”

“Ask pardon of *him*? Never! never! I have come to save you from *him*.”

She paled, and her face twitched convulsively. O my lady, could you have looked into my heart that day!

“What do you know of this man?” she asked.

“Nothing and everything. Your brother——”

She held up her hand imperiously.

“Stop! You have no right to mention his name here. He is not here to defend himself. He has told you nothing. He was not a coward. He would have spoken to me had he known anything that threatened my happiness. You dare not say that he spoke to you, who was silent with me. Tell me that lie, if you dare.”

“No, my lady, he never spoke to me!”

“Who then?”

“Nobody, but O my lady, for God’s sake listen to me.”

"No, I will not listen to any low suspicions. I am not a coward, either. I dare be just even when it pains me. You have been dear to me, because you were dear to my brother, and if he were alive you would never dare to outrage and insult me as you have done to-day in the midst of the deepest grief of my life. Leave me, and let me *never* see you again. *Never*, do you understand? *I never want to see your face again.*"

I reeled backwards. I thought for a moment I was going to fall. I tried to speak, but she silenced me at once with a look of deep contempt, saying:

"Not a word! away with you, at once!" I ran from the garden beside myself with grief and humiliation; I staggered to my room, threw myself across the bed and wept like a child, and like the child that I was yet; but when I ceased to sob at nightfall, I was a man. Grief had baptized me. With stinging remorse, I recognized the perfect imbecility of what I had done. I was absolutely without any proof of the truth of the charge I had mentally brought against the marquis, and which I was prepared to make openly against him. It all rested on that acute intuition which is stronger than reason in us, and which no reasoning can refute. But I was stunned with the blow of my lady's displeasure. The love for her made me a coward in her presence. I was struck dumb by those cruel words, "*I never want to see your face again!*" O, how could she say that to me in this bitter hour of our mutual desolation! How could she forget my long years of faithful service! Was all my silent adoration nothing to her, compared with the flattering fondness of a stranger?

But I would not desist yet in my efforts to save her. I rushed to Richard Glenn. I blurted out all my suspicions, my fears, my anguish, in a voice broken with sobs. I begged him to go to her, not to try to restore me to favor, no, that was hopeless; but to tell her quietly, reasonably, just what had occurred before that fatal canvas, that she might judge for herself what grounds she had to fear that the man she loved was a

heartless libertine. "And tell her," I added, "that I shall obey her to the letter, that she shall never see me again; but that I leave her broken-hearted, never again to know happiness, so long as I live."

"My poor boy! my poor boy!" He drew my head to his breast; he stroked my hair with a hand as tender as my mother's. He promised to do all that I asked; but he added that trite old adage that love is blind, and said that to him it was not quite so conclusive as to me, that the marquis was guilty of any illicit relation with Mlle C——; that in the morbid state of his feelings Lord Eliot might have drawn unwarrantable conclusions. Love warps the judgment tremendously; for his part, he had seen the Judith; but, unless his attention had been called to the likeness, he would not have remarked its resemblance to Mlle C——. But he could quite understand the situation. As for myself, if I wished to go back to Scotland.—Here I interrupted him, passionately, to say that I could never consent to go back home disgraced, or to run the risk of being seen by one to whom I had become odious. No, the world itself seemed too small to hold us both, and I wished that I was lying stark and cold beside my dead friend.

He did not try to reason with me; he knew the human heart too well; but he bade me give way to my grief and empty my heart of all its bitterness; and then, when the first paroxysm was over, he held my hand firmly in his, and with a voice that trembled, and eyes that were wet with tears, as they looked into mine, he told me that in his solitary life I had been as a son to him, that he had tried to put something of himself into my young heart that it might live when he himself was dust and ashes; and he implored me not to disappoint him. Lord Eliot's death had been a terrible blow, an unforgettable grief to him; but he had had one consolation in the midst of it, I had been spared to him. All his life-work had not been lost.

I looked at the thin face, worn with grief, sharp-

ened with intellect. How was it that I had not seen that he, too, suffered? The egotism of my grief melted into sympathy for the moment. I pressed my hot lips to his thin cheek. I promised him to be a man. I thanked him warmly for all that he had done for me, and bade him good-by, knowing that I was never to see him again.

Since coming abroad I had received a regular salary, but as I was able to save the greater part of it, I had sent it home to my mother. Fortunately, I had not yet sent off my last allowance, and it was quite enough, with a little economy, to see me safely to America.

I knew that a merchant ship set out nearly every week from Naples to New York, and I resolved to embark by the first one that sailed. I made a little package of my clothes, putting among them a small volume of Horace that my young master and I had often read together. My tears fell anew, as I strapped it into my bundle, and there came over me that fierce hunger to see him once more, which has so often cruelly assailed me.

On leaving the house, I made no effort to hire a carriage; it seemed to me impossible to endure the strain of sitting still in a close carriage alone with my wretchedness. I felt the need of numbing my body, or of fatiguing it with walking, and so, if possible, dulling, too, the torture of my mind.

The night was superb; one of those tranquil, cloudless nights when the moon is at her full, and lights up the landscape almost with the distinctness of day. But this serene sky and quiet loveliness of nature seemed to mock my grief. I would have given all I possessed for a storm to drench me to the skin, deafen my ears with its thunder, and threaten me with vivid flashes of lightning. Ah! Nature was kind, not cruel, to Lear, when she loosed her winds and rains to beat against him. I walked all night long, without once stopping, for when I would have flagged, that cruel memory came

like a scourge to whip me into line. No one is a philosopher until after the tempest and in retrospect; during the storm, he is a man. And I was very much of a man that night and for many and many a day after. To be sure I did all that I could to distract myself, but in everything that I did and in everything that I said, I was conscious of this dark background of sorrow. It was my last thought when I fell asleep, my first thought when I awoke. But it is very remarkable that it never once appeared in my dreams. There is a generally received idea that our dreams are the shadowy reproductions of our principal thoughts. But it has never happened to me to dream of what has occupied me the most. And that has been a great comfort to me.

I did not make the entire journey between Florence and Naples on foot; but I was at the end of my strength before I took a carriage. My feet were badly bruised and swollen, my whole body ached and my head was dizzy with extreme fatigue. There were hours when the courage to live almost forsook me, and I think if I had not found a ship at Naples ready to sail, it would have gone hard with me.

At any other time I would have been extremely interested in the crowds of emigrants that filled the ship. But a great passion, either of grief or joy, makes egotists of us, shuts us up in the narrow circle of our own emotions, blinding us to everything outside of its fatal circumference. I looked at this eager, restless crowd huddled on the quay with perfect indifference, although it was to furnish me with daily companions in a long voyage.

CHAPTER XII

EN ROUTE FOR AMERICA

I HAVE often asked myself since, whether I would have undertaken the voyage if I could have anticipated all the misery of that two months' sea-trip. I had not foreseen one of the little details of equipment so necessary to ensure as much comfort and convenience as possible, which was little enough at the best. I had no idea of the condition of the emigrants on one of these great vessels, where I found we were heaped together confusedly, men and women, old and young, like so many cattle. All that is changed now. Foreign governments think enough of their citizens to assure them a passage across the ocean in which, at any rate, the laws of decency shall be observed; but at that time the only concern that any one had about them was to get them across, no matter how.

My exceptional education had not at all decreased my sympathy with the poor among whom I always classed myself; but every sentiment of delicacy and modesty in me revolted at the total impossibility of being alone day or night. Then, too, I had some very decided prejudices in favor of cleanliness, and the filthy rags with which my companions tried to cover their nakedness, not always succeeding, exhaled a nauseous odor of reeking bodies unfamiliar with soap and water from the day of their birth—that turned me deathly sick. I would have been ashamed of myself had I been effeminate enough to recoil before hunger, cold, fatigue or hard work; but I should have had to be a saint not to recoil before what makes the hideous ugliness of poverty—dirt and indecency. My clothes, my

manner, my taciturnity and my foreign birth, quickly created a prejudice against me that might have increased to real hostility, had I not fallen very ill the second day out. The stench and stifling heat of my first night on board had finished me. I could not lift my head, I shivered and burned, alternately, in a state of indescribable pain and nausea. This atrocious suffering made my companions forgive me for the time for being socially their superior, and as I accepted their clumsy efforts at relief with expressions of gratitude, they soon vied with each other as to who should render me a service; and I learned to recognize, under all their rags and filth, a warm spontaneous kindness that augured well for their capacity for improvement in the free country to which they were going. When I grew better, I began to teach them English, which they were all eager to learn; and my lessons lasted, not only from dawn till nightfall, but during every moment I was awake. This ceaseless occupation was all that made the voyage supportable to me, half effacing, for the time at least, the memory of my sufferings. And the teaching came back to me in many a forcible lesson of patience and endurance; and in many an expression of impulsive love from these sunny-hearted children of the South, whom age never touches, except on the surface. They made the very best of their miserable surroundings. They laughed, they played, they sang, they quarreled, and made up again. They decked themselves out on Sundays and feast days with bits of brilliant color and bright, cheap jewels. They had their little romances in various corners of this little motley ship-world, and even I, morose, wretched, heart-hungry to famishing, had my little romance, too, and was envied for my luck, chided for my coldness, and but for my linguistic services, might have fared badly at the hands of my jealous rivals.

Chance had placed near me in the miserable holes where we were obliged to pass the night together, a

young girl of sixteen, one of those brown beauties to be found nowhere else but in the south of Italy and in Spain. She had a great quantity of glossy, black hair, never in order, yet never appearing untidy, and dark eyes with a touching expression of melancholy, when her face was in repose, but full of animation when she laughed. For the rest, a girl who had matured early under the sunny skies of Italy, but who had laughed at love, for the very reason that love came running after her on every side.

Now, for me, even the proximity of so beautiful a girl couldn't lessen the horror of that first night on the ship. To feel around me all these moist, warm bodies; to breathe the fetid air from these hundreds of mouths, old and young, healthy and diseased; to hear the groans, and hiccoughs, snores and curses, and various forms of wailing that issued from them, was for me the realization of Dante's most horrible visions. My imagination increased the horrors of it to such an extent that I believe I would have thrown myself into the sea to escape it, had I not prevailed upon the surgeon to grant me the privilege of sleeping on the open deck.

But I was so poorly provided for the voyage, having nothing with me but a change of clothing, that I would have suffered from the cold had it not been for the generosity of my companions, who furnished me with blankets and a straw pillow. But to no one was I indebted so much as to the beautiful young Anita, who chose to be my nurse. During my long illness of three weeks, she never left me, night or day. How many times I awoke during the nights to find my head reclining on her breast, her arms around my neck, I cannot tell. I remonstrated with her. I was even peevish and harsh. I opposed my cold rules of propriety to the warm instincts of her heart, but all in vain. She covered me with kisses; she called me her little English icicle whom she meant to thaw back to life,

and I finished like a coward by letting her have her way, and accepted passively all the riches of this young heart, saying vaguely to myself that to be irresponsible is a crime. But I told her no lies. She knew well that I did not love her. One night, near the end of the voyage, we were sitting together on the deck; the night was raw and misty, and we had thrown a heavy blanket about our shoulders. I felt her body shivering against mine, and I said:

“Are you cold, Nita?”

“Yes,” she answered, and her teeth chattered, and she huddled closer to me. I put my arm about her and drew the blanket over her head.

“There, is that better? Never mind, there won’t be many more nights of this. We’ll soon be in America. They expect to sight land Thursday morning.”

“Oh don’t! don’t! don’t! I can’t *bear* to hear you say it like that,” and she put her hand over my mouth. “I wish we would *never* sight land. I wish we could sail on forever and ever, you and I, like this. Oh, *why* can’t you love me? But I know very well why. There is some one else whom you love. You are running away from her, but you can’t do it, she is still there, there,”—and she placed her hand on my heart—“and there is no place for me. Oh, I could *kill* her, kill her for having taken my place. Forget her. Can’t you do it? She does not know how to love as I do.” She seized my head with her two hands, and I felt her moist, warm lips devour my face with furious kisses. For a moment I was carried away by the ardor of her passion and a terrible temptation assailed me; but something stronger yet checked my impulse. I tore myself from her, and grasping her two trembling hands that felt like ice between my own, I told her that she had spoken the truth. I did love another. She bounded away from me with a low, moaning cry, and, trembling like a leaf, I sat down again, and buried my burning face in my hands. Shall I confess all the

truth? I had no joy in my victory over myself, and for a moment felt that I had committed a crime against nature.

Three days afterwards we sighted the long bar of Sandy Hook, glistening like gold in the morning sunlight. We were wild with joy, weeping, shouting, jostling each other, waving handkerchiefs, caps, shawls, bits of rags, mothers holding their children high in their arms, and shouting at the top of their voices: "*La terra! La terra!*" How many gilded hopes, how many visions of an earthly paradise were summed up in that shining strip of yellow sand, against the blue horizon. Say what we will of the bitterness of life, it has one beautiful winged thing, and that is hope. But as for me, my heart was too sore, yet, to be comforted by hope. An inexpressible sadness seized me, in the midst of all this excited joy. A feeling of terrible solitude, a vague horror of the unknown destiny awaiting me there, an impatience to confront it and know its worst, was all that yellow shore could offer me. While I looked at it, I felt my eyes dimming and my throat aching with suppressed sobs. Suddenly a hand touched mine. I turned quickly and saw Nita beside me, her pretty face bathed in tears. I had not seen her, to speak to, since that night that I had repelled her love.

"And you would leave me," she said, "without even saying good-by?"

"No, no," I answered, bending over her and taking her hand in mine. "I owe too much to all your kindness to me, ever to forget you, or to be willing to leave you without thanking you again with all my heart."

Her face brightened, as if the sun had suddenly shone upon it.

"Oh, take me with you," she implored. "Don't leave me, don't leave me, I beg of you. I ask nothing at all of you, but leave to love you. I will be your faithful servant; I shan't even ask you to caress me. I only want to hear your voice, to see you from time to time.

Haven't you missed me just a little all these three days? They have seemed a thousand years to me. Oh, love me just a little, just a little." She hid her face against my breast, weeping like a child. My heart ached with sympathy, but not with love. What a capricious thing is the human heart! Thirsting for love, and receiving it in full measure, I could not quench my thirst, for disdain of the cup in which it was offered me. There are men whose heart is so unstable that they can quit a beloved woman with their lips still warm with her kisses, and fly to the arms of another. I am not of that stamp. My affections have always had a singular tenacity. All my being was rooted elsewhere. I could not live in any other soil.

But strange revenge of time! more than any other woman, she has come back to my mind during the long years of our separation; and it may be only another form of vulgar self-love and not gratitude, that recalls her; but I have a singular pleasure in her memory. Probably she has not thought of me half so often. Violent loves, like violent storms, die out quickly, and leave a calm after them; and, then, she was not one to love but once. Very likely, she is now a happy wife and mother, guarding in her memory only a half-effaced souvenir of her early love; while with me, her memory is always fresh and green; and when I am on the point of complaining of the aridness of my life, I think of her, and feel her warm cheek touching mine—a youthful vision ever beautiful, ever young.

But when I met her I had just been driven out of paradise. I had seen heaven, and could not content myself with earth. That is the reason, too, that I was predestined to be unhappy in America. There was not one of these poor, ignorant, half-clothed emigrants who was not fitter than I to find a place that suited him. My father had been quite right in his fears about me. My education had prepared me for leisure and luxury. I had acquired artificial tastes which nothing but an old

and cultured civilization could satisfy. I had high ideals towards which I aspired with all the ardor of youth and sincere faith; and I had absolutely no acquaintance with vulgar realities. Of course I was prepared to find striking contradictions in this land that proudly boasted itself the land of the brave and the free, and held thousands of its fellow-men enchain'd in slavery. I expected a certain crudity of manners in a new country, chiefly bent on making use of its natural resources. I expected a general recognition of merit based only on the capacity for "getting on in the world," which in its turn means getting plenty to eat, and drink, and wear, and spend. But I was not at all prepared to find everywhere an inordinate pride, or to speak more properly, a colossal provincialism, so naïve that it could swallow the grossest flattery without suspicion that it was anything but the truth, and could not bear the slightest criticism without falling into a childish rage. Everything, from the country itself to a cross-road tobacco shop, was the "greatest in the world"; and if a stranger who had really seen something of the world ventured to demur, he was set down as an ignoramus filled with envy at what he saw, or unceremoniously asked, why in h—— he didn't stay in his own country.

I also found a freedom of manners running into rudeness and insolence; a stubborn prejudice against foreign nations, especially against the mother country from whence came its best traditions; and a strange contempt for all the conventionalities that facilitate social intercourse, and make it agreeable, accompanied by a perverse judgment in favor of coarseness and bluntness, under the name of democracy. But this is only another instance of the effort of self-love to save its pride by decrying what it hasn't, after the fashion of the tailless fox who insisted that all his neighbors should cut off their tails, because he had lost his own. Just as soon as facilities for foreign travel and the means of general culture increase the acquaintance with social proprieties.

they will be practiced here as elsewhere; and, perhaps, for a time, with exaggerated fastidiousness. I still remember my amazement at the question of a venerable old lady, who had been educated in a boarding-school, as to which was the proper way to fold one's arms. She had been taught, she said, to spread the hand over the elbows, but she had lately observed that a great many people concealed one hand, and partly displayed the other, in folding the arms.

But at present the great majority are very far from any solicitude concerning their manners.

Indeed, the general respect for the want of good manners is carried so far in certain parts of the country, that signs of personal negligence among men are admiringly quoted as an indication of vigorous democratic manliness; and I have heard of a member of the national legislature who owed his popularity entirely to the fact that he always wore a slouch hat, his trousers tucked into his boot-tops, and never in his life had worn a dress-coat; and I myself, at this writing actually know a really clever man, college-bred, who couldn't be elected in his district for an office, which he was eminently qualified to fill, because the report was circulated that he wore silk stockings; and the phrase "silk-stockinged aristocracy" was raised as a damaging party-cry for the political campaign of that year.

But this did not shock me so much as it seemed puerile and ridiculous, a mark of the infancy of a nation that lacks the wholesome restraining influence of a venerable past. A citizen of the old world has inherited noble traditions that keep him in a proper state of modesty, if he has any sense at all. When his pride in himself would grow over-weening, history, art, architecture, literature, are all there, to check him with the memory of his fathers. He recognizes in them a generous rivalry, for they are present only as a stimulus; he goes to school to them, as it were, and even should he surpass them, he does not reverence them the less; he

knows that they laid the stepping stones by which he climbed a little higher.

The citizens of the U. S., on the contrary, were orphans at an early age. They have brought up themselves, and, like self-made men, are proud of the fact. Their success still smells of varnish. But the time will come when they will be so accustomed to prosperity and the extent of their territory, that they will take it quite as a matter of course, and will not care to hear their boots squeak, to show that they are new. And when that time comes, neither will they be any longer embarrassed by courtesy as a badge of distinction, but will have learned to be courteous themselves. And if that courtesy is a genuine outgrowth of character, and not a mere whitewash, there will be a keener sense of honor prevalent, solid enough to resist the vulgar temptations of commercial life. Truth and honesty will be in repute again and not regarded, as at present, as old-fashioned prejudices incompatible with progress. I had come from the society of men to whom the word *liar* wasn't simply a term of reproach, but a deadly insult, as implying the most sneaking form of cowardice. I found it in high repute on this side of the water, and again and again heard young men boast of the lies which they had told to secure trade, as if it required a superior degree of intellectual acuteness to lie unblushingly. In short, victimizing other people within the pale of the law passed for "smartness," and I wasn't long in falling into the list of victims, because I had had no experience except with honest people.

I had no difficulty in finding something to do, because I was ready to do anything, no matter what—were it only sweeping the streets. My experience on board ship had shown me the superiority of the spirit of the acceptance of unavoidable misery over that of fastidiousness; and I was no longer inclined to revolt uselessly. I began with loading vessels on the quay, hard work, at which I literally earned my bread in the sweat

of my brow, as later by breaking stone on the road. Unaccustomed to physical labor, I trembled and staggered under loads that seemed to crush my back and shoulders. My uncalloused hands bled, but I persevered, sustained by a fire within me that had not yet had time to cool. I remembered my father's cold contempt for weakness, to which was now added a sullen anger that refused to pardon me for the course which I had taken. I had written to my mother as soon as I had arrived in America. I had said nothing of the cause of my sudden departure from Italy; I had spoken but briefly of that which touched me most, the death of the young lord, and added that it seemed to me an indication that I was henceforth to be thrown upon my own resources, and that I hoped to show that my education had not made a woman of me. I duly received a reply to this letter written by my sister, married three years before, and now living in Glasgow with her little daughter and her husband. She told me that my letter had broken my mother's heart; that my father had interpreted it as a cowardly abandonment of my lord's family in their need, and a cold indifference to my own family, and was so enraged that he forbade my mother to write to me, and declared that my name should never be mentioned in his presence again. But she added for her own part, that neither she nor my mother had lost faith in me; that they believed I had had some good reason for the action I had taken and that if I continued to write I must send the letters to her, and she would see that my mother was kept informed about me. I did not reply to this letter, I felt utterly alone in the world, and to the immense bitterness of my grief, was added the vulgar sordidness of my surroundings. A gloomy and defiant despair seized me; a dull rage without a definite object; and although disgusted with the coarse and brutal distractions of my companions, I did for a time plunge into them, to try in vain to forget that the world had ever seemed beautiful to me, and life

worth living. But I could not persist in this course of low dissipation. Every instinct in me revolted, and called me back to decency. I found employment in a large dry-goods house. My diligence and docility rapidly advanced me. I gained the confidence of my employer and was sometimes invited to his house to take tea with his family. He was a self-made man of a great deal of shrewdness and natural kindness. Among my fellow-employees I found an ambitious young man about my own age, who interested me. He told me there was a French strain in his blood and that he was eager to learn the language. I offered to teach him all that I knew, and we spent three or four evenings of each week together for that purpose. He seemed to be really attached to me, and, for my part, in the barrenness of my life, at present, he was the one bright spot. I looked forward with eagerness to the end of the day, when we could be together. We shared our thoughts, and, though I never told him the story of my life, he knew in a general way that I had received exceptional advantages and he called himself a lucky dog in getting acquainted with me, saying that I was as valuable to him as a university course.

"I used to waste a lot of time with silly girls before I knew you," he said to me one night. "But somehow, after a fine talk with you, I can't stand gabbling with a raw girl who hasn't two ideas in her head outside of making herself pretty to look at."

One day about a year later he came to me in a great deal of excitement, saying: "George, if I had \$250 to start me off, I could be rich inside of a few years. I've got a new scheme that nobody else has ever thought of." With that, he unfolded his scheme, and concluded by asking me if I could lend him the money at six per cent. Now, I hadn't saved anything yet; but I was so anxious to serve him as a friend, that I promised to lend him the amount by borrowing it for him from my employer. He thanked me effusively, assured me that

before the year was out I should be repaid. I went with a burning face to my employer to ask a favor for my friend that I would not have asked for myself, for all the world, and had no difficulty in getting the money. I never shall forget the pride with which I handed him the sum which, to the poverty of both of us, seemed so considerable, and he seemed very grateful for it. I assured him that if it had been my own he should have had it as a friendly loan without interest, and that I would pay it off as soon as possible, so that he needn't be burdened with the interest. He looked at me a moment, then laughed, saying: "George, you're easy!" I didn't understand the full extent of the term; but if being easy meant that it was a genuine pleasure for me to inconvenience myself for my friends, then I really was very "easy." He left the city and I have never seen him since.

By private tutoring during my leisure hours, which furnished an addition to my meager salary, and the strictest economy, I was able to pay off the note and interest at the close of a half year; but I had so far lowered my vitality by over-work, cheap food, and mental depression, that I fell ill of a fever, and was sent to a hospital, where, for six weeks, I languished between life and death. I left the hospital in debt for fees, and too feeble to resume work, at once. I wrote to my friend, asking him for a remittance of what he owed me, explaining my situation to him. He wrote me that he was sorry, but he had just got married, and needed all his money to start housekeeping. Later, if he saw his way clear, he would send me some money.

CHAPTER XIII

UNDER THE ROD

I READ the letter with a sinking of the heart that affected me like a physical blow. I trembled and turned faint. I could ill afford to lose the money; but I was young and impressionable, and I could far less afford to lose my faith in humanity, for it was the only capital that I had, and he had made me bankrupt! I had leaned on his friendship, and found it rotten straw. He had deserted me in the hour of my greatest need. I could no longer be useful to him, and common decency had no power over him to replace the want of gratitude and honor. I can hardly forgive myself, now, for the waste of pain which this disillusionment cost me. But my world was a very narrow one at that time. I had not yet learned to find my strength within myself, and to such as I was then, these are bitter hours when human ties fail us. Later, we look at these disillusionments as but the falling of the scaffolding when the building is complete. One more blow was to follow, and then my martyred heart had nothing more to fear, for no human being was near enough to me to pain me deeply by any treachery or any loss. This last blow was the death of my mother; but it was one of those pure griefs, mingled with no wounded self-love, and it seemed to wash the bitterness out of my soul. I saw her again, as I had seen her for the last time, her sweet face wet with tears, her voice choked and trembling as she said to me:

“George, you are happy now, you do not need me. My love is something superfluous in the overflowing

richness of your life. But, perhaps, there will come a day (I hope not) when happiness will deceive you and you will wish to rest on a heart that beats only for you. Remember me on that day, my boy. If I am living, come to me. If I am dead, remember, that I am up there; and that even in heaven I could not be quite happy if you were wretched; and, if possible, I shall be near you to keep you from evil, and to throw about you the influence of this great love which follows you everywhere. O my eldest son!—the pride of my heart!"

I pressed her against my heart, astonished at this simple eloquence which was not in her manner. I was touched by her words, but my heart was so full of joy—pain seemed so impossible, so remote, that they were but winged words and flew over, rather than sank into my heart. But, to-day, they found a void, and filled it.

I threw myself across the bed in the cheerless little room that I occupied, and cried bitterly. Then a great resolution came to me, a sacred hush in the grief that absorbed me, and, rising, I whispered audibly, as if she had been there to hear me:

"O my mother, I have wandered far away from gratitude for your faithful love. I have sought its sweetness elsewhere, and found nothing but bitterness; and I swear to you, now, that hereafter I shall live as if you were always near me, your hand holding mine, your eyes looking into mine. I will do nothing at sight of which you could not say: 'Well done, my son!' I shall bear my griefs as you have borne yours, and when I can no longer bear them, I will do as you did, I will die of them. You have not loved and hoped all in vain. No, by all that is sacred, I will make something of my life for your sweet sake. I am done now forever with false loves, false friends. I know, now, the source of the only beneficent self-sacrificing love on earth—it is the heart of a mother."

In murmuring this resolution, I felt a new strength thrill me. I lost no time in vain regrets over my stupidity. Remorse and regret sap the soul of vitality when it most needs it. I recognized that all my errors, all the sins of my life had been efforts to be happy. I did not feel that my experiences had been wholly lost on me. I had learned that it requires an extraordinary natural impulse towards the intellectual life to sustain it alongside a life of continued hard labor. Leisure is the mother of civilization, and the man who hasn't it, or who makes an ill use of it, is in danger of becoming a brute. I saw that my satisfaction in life could only come from a change of work that would assure me leisure to think, to study, to resume in short the intellectual interests that had been the occupation of my boyhood and youth. My mother's love and thoughtfulness for me made this possible. Instead of spending the money which I had sent her from Europe, while with Lord Eliot, she had carefully put it all aside for me, and at her death a cheque for that sum, amounting to \$450, was sent to me.

My resolutions made, I bathed my face, and looked into the glass to see if the trace of the tears had been removed. I was twenty-four years old—a full-grown man, but the face that looked back at me from the glass had something very boyish in it, in spite of the hard experiences through which I had passed. The eyes were a little more sunken, the cheeks thinner than formerly; but my mother would have recognized me yet in a moment. My hands alone retained no trace of their former softness and whiteness.

It was the 13th of June, 1849, a brilliant day, the pure air of which cooled my burning cheeks. "*La vita nuova*," I said to myself as I stepped into the street.

Italy, then, was in the midst of her political throes attendant the birth of a new régime, and I was following her history with sympathy and curiosity.

Garibaldi was the hero of the hour; he had landed

at Nice the preceding year, and all the civilized world was following his movements.

I bought a copy of the *New York Tribune* from a newsboy, and not only found the news which I was searching, but also a new answer to the question which was most deeply tormenting me: What shall I do with my life?

I care little about American newspapers. There are few of their editors who either properly realize, or care in the least, about the moral influence which they exert. Many of them are merely published as the mouth-piece of political parties, and instead of trying to give a better tone to the thoughts of their readers, they aim merely at a foolish popularity, and cater to the most vulgar curiosity of the public. They fill, for their readers, the place of a malicious gossip in a country town, who knows everybody's business when it is bad and retails it with a relish to all her neighbors. The only difference is that, instead of the town, it is the world at large that furnishes the gossip on a colossal scale; and the paper reeks with the odors of the sewerage of many cities.

Column after column of personal details concerning notable people or notorious nobodies, scandal, crime, casualties, are mingled with recipes for removing freckles, and descriptions of fashionable toilets.

But there are newspapers of another class, not published merely to set afloat national and international gossip. Their editors are men of character and high intelligence, who feel the distinction between gossip and news. They feel it a matter of professional honor to give their readers something worth reading. The *New York Tribune* is of this number. About this time the pretty, impracticable social dream of Brook Farm had just ended in a flat failure. As communism is mostly the dream of those who have never boarded, it does not long survive a thorough experience of being boarder and boarding-house keeper on a colossal scale. Doing

your own work in your own way is soon seen to be vastly superior in comfort and satisfaction to doing everybody's work in everybody's way; and communists, after such an experience, go thankfully back to individualism, wide awake, with a conviction solid enough never again to be shaken by the dream of human perfectibility as an outcome of holding hands. They have learned the ever recurrent, ever bitter lesson of life that in his deepest interests, every man is absolutely and necessarily alone, and can count upon no one but himself for serious help.

George Ripley, the founder of the Brook Farm experiment, had commenced contributing little essays and literary criticisms to the *Tribune*, and it chanced that on this day I found a review which he had written on H. D. Thoreau's "A Week on the Concord and Merrimac." I have the paper before me, now; I open it with care, for it is torn at the folds and yellow with years. Here are the first lines that struck me on that June day long ago:

"A really new book—a fresh, original work is sadly rare in this age of omniferous publication. Mr. Thoreau's, if not entirely this, is very near it." Then followed a temperate criticism, introduced by the observation that "Mr. Thoreau is a native and resident of Concord, Massachusetts—a scholar, a laborer and in some sort a hermit. He traveled somewhat in his earlier years (he is still young), generally trusting to his own thoughts for company, and his walking cane for motive power. It would seem a main purpose of his life to demonstrate how slender an impediment is poverty to a man who pampers no superfluous wants, and how truly independent and self-sufficient is he who is in no manner the slave of his own appetites."

I stopped at this sentence with a sudden thrill of joy. I was like a blind man groping in the darkness, to whom some great surgeon had suddenly held out the hope of a restoration of his sight. That is what I

was asking of life, this interior light which would insure me independence. Poor, solitary, deeply humiliated, abandoned by those whom I had loved and trusted, my heart still bleeding from an unhealed wound, I wished to find in myself the strength and joy I had sought in others. I wished to regain my own esteem, and find life beautiful once more; but to do that I must know how to transmute my griefs into strength; and at the same time retain that sensibility which is tender without weakness, and can enjoy without wishing to possess. Had I been a woman, I might have sought, and doubtless would have found, my consolation in religion, as so many women do. I should have renounced happiness on earth for the promised bliss of heaven. But I was a man. I wanted my happiness now, in this life, which alone I was sure of. I had tasted it, I had lost it, and knew that it was never to be found in the same fashion, again. I did not wish to be counseled to find my joy outside of myself, or to throw my griefs on the shoulders of Christ. I wished to find my happiness where alone it could be permanent and inviolable, and that must be in my own heart and mind.

This new book gave me the hope of finding a guide. I started off, immediately, to hunt for a copy, found one, bought it, and hurried home to devour it at my ease. Ripley's criticism had given me little more than a vague idea of the richness of thought to be found in the book, although his want of sympathy with its liberal tone had encouraged me to hope that I should find an eye which looked straight ahead, and not backwards. I was not disappointed. Happy the man who finds the book that can speak to him at the right time! For we are not always ready to digest a good book. A year earlier, I should have thought the book lacking in the warm pulse-beat of life; that is to say, too radiant with the white light of intelligence, not warmly enough colored with the red blood of the heart. I would have shivered and gasped for breath in this dry cold air; but,

to-day, I breathed it with full-expanded lungs, and it was an elixir to me.

I was weary of useless suffering. I longed ardently to be master of myself, to enjoy my liberty, to say to the world: You can never again wound me, I have escaped from your power; and I wished to say it with my feet on the solid earth, and not from the tenth story of a paradise of fools. I was too sound to be a debauchee, too sane to be a mystic. I must live in healthy realities to be happy. I had lived long enough in illusions. Did I wish to forget that I had loved? A thousand times, no. That love was woven into my very growth. I could not lose the memory of it, without losing my identity. But I wished it to cease to trouble me with vain regrets and vain remorse. I wished to possess it, without any longer being possessed by it.

In this book of Thoreau's, I saw the man I would have given anything to be—the man who having health and a sharpened intelligence asks nothing of fortune, nothing of society: he himself is fortune and society. His solitude is the fullest and most intimate companionship, because his thoughts are neither shackled nor interrupted by bigotry or babbling. Luxury would be lost on him, for it speaks to tastes that he hasn't. Under the open sky, he is everywhere at home: everywhere at home, also, in the presence of truth and sincerity; only an alien among the vain shows of things.

It is true, that this aloofness from what makes the common interests of society will pass for selfishness or for shirking, in the eyes of many; but it ought not to be forgotten for a moment that that man does the most for society who gives it the example and encouragement of the best possible development of all his faculties. It is not Thoreau as a family man or a good neighbor who could give us the peculiar, rich fruit of him. It is Thoreau ripening in the fields and woods, and not pot-planted in a back-parlor to the delight of society, or fenced about for family use in a kitchen

garden, from whom, in the long run, society and the family are to get the most good. Like the rose which fulfills its mission of blooming, intent on that alone, and not troubling itself as to whether the lily and violet near by are blooming also, he, too, puts forth his flower and fruit to smell and taste sweet to those who were to come after him. How full of courage, how tonic his voice was to me that bright June day! I no longer felt myself an alien in the world. Here, too, was a man to whom the world's gains are losses, purchased at the expense of senses dulled to any but coarse and sensual pleasures.

My observations of commercial life had shown me that all the delicate instincts of the mind, all its capacity for larger thought and deeper sympathies are atrophied in this exclusive and vulgar desire to get rich. There is no principle of honor that is not strained to breaking in this fierce struggle of competition, no warm human tie that does not grow lax and cold. Such a life was a torture to me. I felt gagged and bound hand and foot in it. To give the best hours of my day and the freshest fruits of my mind to long lines of figures—to lie and steal within the pale of the law, to take advantage of my neighbor's misfortunes to fill my own purse, to come home every night with this stifling dust of the world in my throat, stupefied, dulled; to sit down to a loaded table in company with office clerks and commercial travelers, and hear over again the same stale talk of money! money! money! seemed to me at last, not merely insupportable, but suicidal.

I began to search eagerly for more information about Thoreau, and I learned that he had voluntarily retired from the world for two years in order to give himself leisure to think and live in all his faculties; and that during that time he had amply fed and clothed himself from the fruits of his labor on a little patch of ground on which he had built a hut.

Ah, that was something that I, too, could do. Here

was the question of leisure and independence solved at once, and I began immediately to make plans to carry out a similar experiment. I recalled my delight in the beautiful forest in the midst of which my childhood had passed. I remembered what a charm the ocean had had for me every time I had stood on its shores, and I resolved to cross the continent and make a home for myself in the virgin forests of the Pacific coast. In making my preparations for departure, I felt for the first time since my misfortune something which resembled joy. My life had an aim. I had known the supreme felicity of perfect friendship, and I could carry the memory of it with me into the wilderness. But the shame and bitterness of the mock friendship, the crude cold contact with those whom I daily met, I should leave behind me when I turned my back on civilization. I left New York on the twenty-fourth of June. I had decided to make the greater part of the journey on foot, and to take a year for it, if necessary, following the line of the larger towns, interesting myself as much as possible in the various aspects of life coming under my notice. I had ordered a small portable bag made for me of tough flexible leather, into which I placed a few books: Shakespeare, Plutarch's Lives, Horace, Montaigne, La Bruyère, La Rochefoucauld, and a small copy of Silvio Pellico's "*Le mie prigione*," which I bought in memory of the pleasure that Lord Eliot and I had taken in it. My choice of the other books was in accordance with the advice of our tutor, who had said to us one day: "You will find that as the years go by, the books which remain longest in your hands and to which you most willingly return, will be those which give you the best reflection of human life. Man is, and always will be, to himself, at least, the greatest fact in the universe. Study man, therefore, in your own heart and in the heart of your fellowmen in life and literature. But distrust for the most part the sentimental poets and novelists. They are incapable of see-

ing things as they are; either over-coloring them with the hues of the rainbow or painting them pitch black, according to the smiles or the tears that destiny has allotted them in life. But so much of human happiness is based on illusion, that the sentimentalists will always have the larger following: then, too, they represent the two most charming things in life, youth and femininity, and it is difficult to escape their fascination. Flee, too, the paradoxical books. They are dead-sea fruit, pleasing to look at, but ashes on the lips."

I was now about to study man under a new aspect. I had seen him under the most favorable conditions of culture I had seen him as an indispensable factor of society—the laborer; I was now to see him as a drone, a superfluity in the society to whose skirts he hangs; the professional tramp. In my journey across the country, I was necessarily often thrown with him, and I found him simply a man whom civilization has left behind, the primitive man, in many respects, neither esteeming nor desiring the advantages of social organization, regarding them rather as hindrances to the satisfaction of the only deeply rooted desire he has, that of supplying the needs of his body without turning his hand over in work. He has his counterpart in the professional beggar of the old world. He is the parasite of the body politic. He is not wicked in the ordinary sense of the word, as implying deliberate and conscious transgression of the written and unwritten law; but he seems incapable of absorbing anything of civilization but its vices; and he is easily corrupted by false ideas, and thinks himself a victim of society, rather than a victim of nature. But the turf is softer to him than a feather bed, and to earn his living would to him be equivalent to losing his life; for his instincts are wholly animal. But I learned to understand his zest in this free, idle, open air life. I grew strong and vigorous in it, and a certain lightness of heart came to me in these long solitary walks that often deepened to the keenest joy.

The color of the sky, the shadows of trees, the flight of a cloud, the brilliant reflection of light in a dewdrop, the twitter of a bird, would sometimes thrill me like the voice of one I loved, and the quick tears would rush to my eyes and a sudden tenderness for all forms of life would fill my heart to aching. Once in Utah, I saw the sun gild a mountain slope, and the soft mellow glow was like a smile on the bare rock and cheered me for hours.

But my experiences were not always delightful. I learned to bear hunger and thirst, cold and rain, and weariness in all its forms. I even had my courage put to severe tests more than once. I knew dejection and discouragement; but still I persisted, saying to myself that the sunshine lay behind the clouds, and must pierce through in time; and that I ought to be ashamed to die until I had proved that I knew how to live.

And so I made my way across the great continent, and found myself in San Francisco, which was then only the hint of a town and swarmed with adventurers rather than honest citizens. Here I supplied myself with agricultural tools and a few necessary articles of household furniture, grains and seeds and a quantity of cuttings of young fruit trees, and embarked on a vessel for the northern shores of Washington Territory. I chose for my future home a tract of land at the head of Bellingham Bay, a beautiful sheet of water surrounded by a magnificent forest. The United States Government has always been generous with her land, and I got mine on easy terms. I remember still the curious exultation I felt in choosing a site for my log-cabin, and how unconsciously the social instinct in me triumphed over the would-be recluse; and all whom I had known and loved trooped about me in fancy, approving or disapproving each new situation.

CHAPTER XIV

LA VITA NUOVA

THERE was a tribe of Indians settled not far from me, and a few whites clustered some two or three miles away, at what is now the town of W——, but practically I was as solitary as Adam before the creation of Eve. But I was too busy to feel lonely. To hew the timber, to shape the logs, to build my cabin, was the work of many days, and when finished I took as much delight in it as if it had been a masterpiece of architecture. I needed only one room, but as space is the luxury of a home, I made it very large and took especial pains with the chimney, which I built with stones gathered from the shore of the bay; and shaped it within, to form a generous hearth after the fashion of one which I had seen in Holyrood. I leveled and beat the earth that I had enclosed, and wanting planks for flooring, I covered it with smooth flat stones, forming a rude mosaic, not wanting in beauty. Later I bought bright, well-woven blankets from the Indians, using them for rugs. I made myself a table, three chairs, and a low couch, which I covered with bear-skins procured again from my friendly neighbors, the Indians. I made my first acquaintance with them about a fortnight after my arrival. I had gone a good bit farther down the bay than usual, searching a muddy bed washed by the tide, in which I hoped to find some edible mollusks. I not only found what I was searching, but also three Indians, who were digging for clams with great success. I knew that they were to be my permanent neighbors, and that it behooved me to live on terms of peace with them. Therefore, I saluted them gravely, and though I could not as yet understand their language, I made them understand my friendly inten-

tions, and by showing them some small coins and pointing to their freshly gathered clams, made some purchases from them and willingly allowed them to carry them home for me. Evidently they reported favorably of me, for I never had the slightest difficulty with them, and am much indebted to them for many a secret of forest life that I might have been years discovering for myself, for example: the medicinal value of various herbs; the edible roots and berries; the way to snare game and preserve the flesh; indications of changes in the weather; an infallible guide to the points of the compass, when lost in the woods; the habits of the wild animals; how to get fire without matches, and how to make pottery of clay. In short, they put me to school in the wild man's education as valuable in its way as any other; for what is education but perfect adaptation to one's surroundings? It was not a knowledge of Latin and Greek and higher mathematics that I needed here. They might pass current in civilization at a high artificial value; but here, in the wilderness, they were like the gold and silver of the wrecked ship to Robinson Crusoe, absolutely valueless compared with a handful of nails and a hammer. I was touching life at its roots, and not where the blossoms grow; and just as among the rude lower class of day-laborers, I had to unlearn much of my refinement to make life tolerable among them; so, here, my body had to unlearn the pampering and coddling of artificial life, and put itself into harmony with nature. Until I could do this, the wild man was my superior. He feared neither wet nor cold. This untamed nature was not his enemy, it was his friend; for he was a part of it, as much as the other animals. To be sure, his range of enjoyment was small compared with that of the man of culture, and he had his terrors of the imagination, but he had also its compensations in that crude poetry in which the elements are personified, and man projects his soul into the inanimate life which surrounds him. They were a curious

study to me, these grown children of the wood; and I have often keenly regretted that mistaken charity of the United States Government which, in attempting to force a nineteenth century culture on a primitive race of the stone age, is slowly but inevitably annihilating them. It is as if we were to force an ax into the small hands of a child, and tell him that he must fell forests with it, or perish. We, too, have come up from the stone age, but slowly, painfully, through the centuries. We climbed the tree of knowledge. We weren't thrown forcibly up to the top of it and left helplessly sprawling among the branches, unable to see heaven or earth for the tangled leaves thrusting themselves into our eyes. Perhaps, some day, we may come to recognize that a college education is not the universal panacea for human ills, that there are even a vast number of stubborn, stolid minds incapable of receiving it, and that the whitewash of culture spread over them is very thin, and will scale and rub off in a remarkably short time.

I did not finish my house until the beginning of autumn. I had worked like a slave, rising before the dawn and quitting my labor with the fall of night, dividing my time between the building of my house and the clearing and tilling of my fields. The climate was delightful, reminding me of that of my native country. The winters were mild, and the summer heat had not that fierce intensity which characterizes it in the Middle States.

I planted an orchard of apples, cherries, peaches and pears, which, in the course of a few years, gave me an ample harvest. It was in connection with my fruits that I began to feel develop in myself a certain love of perfection, which is probably an innate trait of my character, though I was not conscious of it, until now. I did not care particularly about the quantity of fruits my harvest yielded, but I was very solicitous about their being of the first quality. I understood from the first, that a poor tree takes up just as much space and re-

quires just as much care as a good one, and yields no satisfactory results; so I systematically weeded out everything of inferior quality that I had planted, and substituted for it the best that I could get. And of this best, I required the best that it could give me. When my trees showed by their blossoms that they intended to produce abundantly, I let the fruit set and then destroyed much of it to insure a better development of what was left. In preparing for the market, I refused absolutely to sell anything that was not first-class, giving away the inferior fruits to whoever would take the pains to come after them. In this way, I soon had a particular reputation and could sell at the highest price in the market. As the little town grew and the facilities for shipping increased, I added flowers, small fruits and vegetables to the products of my land, and was able to give employment to a number of day laborers, who, in addition to the fair price that I paid them, were allowed to use the fruits and vegetables which I refused to sell.

This refusal was a sort of pride, I dare say, but as my indigent neighbors profited by it, it did more good than harm. I grew very much interested and very happy in my work. Undoubtedly, I inherited from my father his knack at making things grow, and my success increased my ardor. And I can say with a certainty founded on experience, that there is no more sovereign remedy for the griefs of the heart and the weariness of the head than to plant something, care for it, and watch it grow. It is not a mere happy accident that our earliest conception of paradise is a garden. It is a conception founded on experience. Heart and head are interested at the same time, and self-love, without which it is not possible to live, finds its aliment in the thought that all this beauty and vigor of plant life is the work of one's own hands.

The virgin soil asked only to receive the seeds to give them back a hundred fold, so that I had not to occupy myself with those questions of soil that make a science

of agriculture in our days, but I had questions of my own to answer that cost no little time. Every living thing has its enemies. There were harmful insects, against which I had to make war; little wild animals that found my garden a good foraging place; birds that took rather too much pay for their song. I had also to consider the tendency to spread, rather than to concentrate, which dominates nature, whose intentions are not always in the interests of man. I lavished on my plants the care of a mother over her children, and I reprimanded them in their faults, like a good father. I learned to graft choice twigs on foreign stock, and to bring forth new varieties, and, after many years, I was known as an authority in my domain, and saw money pile up around me without effort; and tranquil happiness walked by my side.

Then the Civil War broke out. I am not at all a man of war, and I did not enlist as a soldier, but I felt the justice of the cause. I had enjoyed years of liberty, and I did not wish to see the same privilege denied to anyone on the score of the color of his skin. I had saved about eight thousand dollars. I reserved of that sum five hundred dollars, and gave the rest to the government to be used in the care of the sick and wounded, who were serving their country, and resolved so long as the war continued, to give three-fourths of my earnings for the same purpose. It seemed to me the most legitimate way for me to share in the misfortunes that had befallen the country which sheltered me.

The war is ended. Right has triumphed, but her hands are red with blood. The victims are counted, and history will relate the defeats and the victories; but I am so far away from the hum and noise of it, that it all seems local and temporal, measured with other questions universal and eternal. There is another slavery worse than that which chains the body; and another liberty, incomparably better than that of calling no man master.

CHAPTER XV

A NEW ACQUAINTANCE

I SHOULD give a wrong impression of my life, if it should appear that during all this time I enjoyed no pleasurable social intercourse with my fellow-man. On the contrary, there hardly passed a day, except during the winters, in which I did not see somebody. When I made for my room three chairs, I had counted, even then, on some company, and I did not count in vain. But among my visitors there was only one man whom I could really regard as my equal intellectually, and with whom it really was an exceptional treat to converse. I can hardly explain the feeling I had for him. He interested me at all times, he often fascinated me; yet there were times when he irritated me exceedingly. I had not yet arrived at that degree of wisdom which accepts everything without astonishment, and his cool utterances of what, to me, were the most selfishly immoral principles, never left me unmoved.

Of course, I was familiar with the idea so forcibly set forth by La Rochefoucauld that self-love lies at the bottom of all our actions, even those which are apparently the most disinterested; but to deliberately set up egotism in its cruelest, coldest forms as a code of morals; to place instinct and appetite above reason; to efface the word duty, and substitute for it the word pleasure; to deny that law and restraint are the necessary basis of social organization was something entirely new to me. If it be possible to be born without any moral sense, or to lose it by a persistent course of self-indulgence, I should say that the moral sense was absolutely wanting in him. That was good which pleased him, that

was bad which caused him pain or inconvenience. The universe revolved about him: he felt himself unique.

But, as I said, he was interesting, and unfortunately we have all so great a horror of being bored that we pardon everything to the man or woman who keeps us from yawning. I have often thought, since I met him, that it is a blessing to humanity that along with a natural eloquence, sometimes even brilliant, he was too indolent, or too indifferent to proselyte; else he might easily have founded a modern sect of *Epicuri de grege porci*. For it is a pitiful reflection upon human gullibility that no doctrine is too vile or too idiotic to receive credence, if its founder be only brazen-lunged and brazen-faced enough to keep on preaching it for any length of time; and they who have exercised the deepest influence and the most lasting are not the tranquil thinkers, exponents of truth and common sense; but the wild fanatics, the eloquent insane, the restless dreamers, the inspired idiots: not the Galileos, the Kepplers, and the Newtons, but the Mahomets, the Rousseaus, the Joanna Southcotes, and the Swedenborgs.

John McKenzie, for that is the name of my new acquaintance, came to Washington Territory about five years ago, and took up his residence with an Indian tribe. Among them he found a young Indian girl to his taste, who lived with him as his wife and bore him three children. He is a man of my age, strong, vigorous, handsome, with a bright dark eye, and a general air of masculine strength and intelligence. Besides the bond of race which unites us, there is the closer bond of nationality. He comes from Ayrshire, Scotland, and has his Burns on the tip of his tongue.

We first met one autumn day, two years ago. I was rambling through the woods at a considerable distance from home, a habit I have at this season of the year, and in spring-time. I love to see the youth and the old age of this natural vegetation, which is renewed every year, and I love to see it quite alone. I wish

not to be fastidious in the streets, shops, or bazaars, I have no quarrel with a companion when it comes to riding, driving, or a general conversation at home; but I confess to a rigid exclusiveness when it comes to a long walk in the woods. There I must have sympathy in my companion. He must be capable of silence as well as admiration; he must be indifferent to his individual comfort, unconscious of the existence of dust or brambles. I knew one such elastic, liberal soul, but none here; so that my hours in the woods were always solitary.

While I was walking along, gathering here and there a brighter leaf, a late flower, or some edible berry, I suddenly ran across a man, leaning over a little trap, from which he was freeing a squirrel. I was as surprised as Robinson Crusoe at the trace of a man's foot in the sand of his deserted island; for, during all the years I had lived here, I had never before met a white man in the depths of the forest. As I knew by sight every man in the village and for miles around it, I saw at once that he was a stranger in this vicinity. However, I greeted him as if we were old acquaintances, and he replied in the same manner. Our conversation opened with some questions and replies about the character of the game in the forest. Then came the abrupt introduction.

"You are Mr. George Graham, aren't you?" asked the stranger.

"Yes, that's my name. But you have the advantage over me, for I can't so readily call yours."

"No," he replied with a smile. "I am not an old settler here like you, and haven't made any reputation among my neighbors. By the way, I hear nothing but good of you, and am glad to know you. My name is McKenzie—John McKenzie."

"Ah, that's a Scotch name; glad to meet you, sir."

"Yes, I'm from Ayrshire; and if agreeable to you, you'll very likely see more of me, for though I'm liv-

ing among the Indians up here, I haven't so far uncivilized myself as not to enjoy a talk now and then with one of my race."

This remark interested me and I asked him how a civilized man could reconcile himself to living with an inferior race unless he felt himself called to do so as a missionary; adding that he didn't seem to me to have the air of one, nor of a misanthrope, either.

He laughed, and said I was right: he was neither missionary nor misanthrope, but that he had a passion for liberty, liked to obey no laws but his own—and loved the air of the woods better than that of the streets. Then the conversation took a general turn, and we parted with the wish that we might soon meet again.

It is so difficult to escape judgments limited by one's own personal experience, that thinking of him on the way home, I unconsciously wove a vague romance about him, and fancied some deep private sorrow lay at the bottom of this voluntary withdrawal from his race. I promised myself much pleasure from his company, and in that I was not disappointed, although I soon found my romance about him was all nonsense.

He had read a very great deal, lived under a great variety of circumstances, had thought a good deal, and expressed himself with vigor and originality. He visited me often, seeming to be interested in my manner of living, and to wonder a little at it. By this time I had collected a small but very choice library of several hundred volumes in English, French, German, Spanish, Italian, Greek and Latin.

After looking them over with curiosity, one evening, he said to me:

"Graham, you are a recluse only on the surface and by accident. You belong to the world, and evidently to the society of every country and every age. I am really at heart more of a recluse than you, though I don't call myself that. One of the greatest pleasures I get from living with the Indians is the knowledge that

among them I am free from all attachments that are more than skin-deep."

Now, he had already informed me that he was living familiarly with a young Indian woman, who had borne him children, so that I asked, with some sharpness:

"How is it possible to live without deep attachments, when one has a wife and children?"

We were seated before the huge fireplace, whose flickering light danced over our faces. Outside, the cold was intense, and the snow which had fallen all the short winter day was piled high on the window casings. I had filled a large wooden bowl with nuts, and a pitcher with cider, and after refreshing ourselves with this homely cheer, we had lighted our pipes, and the conversation was in full swing.

At my question, he took his pipe from his mouth, and looking at me with his eyebrows slightly raised, and a half-contemptuous smile on his lips, he said:

"Suppose the children are only accidents, and the wife a convenience?"

"Convenience! accidents!" I repeated, scarcely understanding him.

"I am paying you the compliment of absolute sincerity. I am thinking out loud. Does that shock you?"

"Shock? no;—astonish? yes. I know there are men for whom woman does not exist except as a convenience, or a necessity, but *you*—"

"But *me*? O, my friend, don't put me on a pedestal. I want to stand on the ground where I belong. I have only one virtue. It is that of not posing, or wishing to pass for more than I am worth, and I detest all sentimentalism that refuses to look at me except through stained glass. The savage is strong in me. I am glad of it. That means health, vigor, sanity. I am not the man to think more highly of a bear because he has learned to dance, or of a monkey because he has on a red jacket and a cap with bells, and can hold out

his hand to staring children for a penny. That is about what civilization does for most of us; it teaches us to dance, and to wear a cap and bells, and to bow to the one whose cap is reddest and whose bells make the most noise. That is to say, it creates artificial values. Which is the stronger man of the two, you or I? You can't make the wilderness habitable without bringing into it the essence of civilization," and at this he made a sweeping gesture with his arm in the direction of the bookcases, along the wall—"and I—I shouldn't know what to do with them; this earth itself, the brown crust of it tastes so sweet to me, that I want to nibble at nothing else."

I smiled, and tranquilly asked: "Why do you kick down the ladder by which you have climbed? You are an educated man, and so you, too, carry into the wilderness with you the essence of civilization in the most portable of all forms: a trained intellect, the power to think and feel subtly. You can't rid yourself of your inheritance of the culture of your race by going into the wilderness, any more than the red man could rid himself of his inherited savagery by walking from his wigwam into a public library. Neither is civilization a mere ornament, a trick of carriage or a cap and bells. It is an inherited tendency towards progress and a capacity for it. Ask yourself therefore whether you or an Indian chief are the stronger, and not you or I? You and I are too much alike to be compared."

"No! no! Stop there!" he cried eagerly. "That's the point I wish to clear up. We are *not* alike, you and I, and I want you to know me just as I am. That will put our friendship on a solid basis. It will make our association more agreeable for both of us. You won't expect heroics of me, and I—I shall not expect from you any magnificent indifference to conventionalities and to the so-called laws that make the foundation of society. For although you live like a recluse, you were born to be the ornament of a little coterie of

—of women. You must have been a success among them, eh?"

He took a long pull at his pipe, and then looked at me in a teasing way, as if I had been a boy of twenty. I felt myself redden, and stooped over to stir the fire, which answered my efforts with leaping flames and a cheerful crackling.

"You are entirely mistaken," I said.

"What!" he exclaimed. "Do you mean to be reserved here in the wilds of the forest, and with a half-wild man?"

"Reserves? Who hasn't them, even with himself?"

"Then you deny that you have ever loved a woman?"

"Not at all. I deny nothing. I admit nothing. But I am an old story to myself and the subject doesn't interest me. But you—you are something new, since you say you are not at all like me; let me hear your views of life, then. I assure you that I am a good listener."

He put his pipe into his mouth again, and after smoking a few moments in silence, removed it, and said:

"It is strange! I am not in the habit of talking about myself, either: but I feel reminiscent to-night. I am probably about your age, thirty-eight—though you look a good deal younger than I; but from what you've let fall now and then, I infer that you are older than you look."

"I was born in 'twenty-five," I said.

"Indeed? Well, that's my birth-year, too. I am the youngest son of a well-to-do family, with an entailed estate; and so I was destined from my birth for the church. Absurd, isn't it, to mark out a child's career before he has shown any aptitude for it. To be sure, it doesn't require any degree of intelligence to succeed in the ministry. It is the one calling par excellence in which a very mediocre person can make a fine show in life. The whole outfit is purely conventional.

Let him lay in a stock of silk hats, long-tailed black coats and white cravats; let him fit up his head with a conventional stock of ready-made doctrines and religious phrases; let him shave regularly, and cultivate a sleek expression; let him practice a slow unctuous smile, and a slow, monotonous, grave voice; let him see a great deal of women, and very little of men, and he's set up for life. Christmas and Thanksgiving are not his only turkey days. He sleeps on feathers. He has the fatted calf killed every time he dines out; he is the idol of women and the revered guide of men, who think in grooves, and out of the groove, flounder and fall. Well, God never intended me for a stuffed doll like that. He put blood into my veins instead of sawdust. I could never bow my neck under any yoke, and the predestination to the church was the scourge of my childhood, the despair and shame of my youth, and finally the cause of my voluntary exile from my native land. I disgraced myself for disobedience at college, and to avoid reproaches at home I enlisted in the regular army. But military discipline was no more to my taste than college discipline, or the restraints of clerical life. I tried the sea, for a while, saw many different countries, and finally drifted out here. This half-wild life suits me exactly. It isn't wanting in excitement of a healthy sort, nor in danger; and it gives me what I covet more than anything else on earth, perfect liberty. My family still send me a few hundred dollars from time to time, quite sufficient for all my wants, so that I have never been obliged to succeed in any enterprise I have undertaken. Twice in my younger days I have experimented with civilized life, and shipwrecked my happiness each time. I can't endure the flat monotony of the little petty round of daily duties, where, like a squirrel in a cage, you tread the same wheel forever and ever, and nibble at stale nuts thrown in through the bars. God! how I hate it! Now, I am going to confess, freely, that each time it was a

woman that caged me. And if I had ever found the woman of the right sort, the woman with something broad and free in her nature to answer to the freedom in mine, I might never have broken the bars. But there are no such women. They are all built narrow gauge; and I know nothing in the long run of more deadly weariness than the ordinary domestic woman with her head full of ideas of personal decoration, and a trim little set of social conventionalities to wind around you, till you can't move hand or foot, or draw a full breath to save your life. Do you know what I think about this eternal woman question? I thoroughly believe that, at bottom, outside of a few transitory moments, when nature speaks brutally, intent on her purpose of life, men and women are radically different, and by that one thing are implacable enemies. They haven't the same tastes, the same ideals, the same purposes in life. For man, the hunt, war, life in the open air; for woman, repose, peace, life in the house; for him, the exercise of the intelligence; for her, that of the affections. For him, the companionship of his own sex; for her, that of children.

"The ancients knew that. The savages with whom I live know it, and what virility of intellect they have, they keep intact by knowing it. I tell you a woman can no more think a man's thoughts than grow a man's beard."

"Of course not," I interrupted; "and what of it? Isn't her smooth chin as fine in its way as a beard? Indeed, don't we confess by shaving off our own, that we like it a good deal better? A woman's thoughts, of course, are not a man's thoughts; but they are none the less valuable and true, for they grow out of her experiences, as a man's grow out of his. Her soprano has not the volume of his bass, but it has its range and sweetness, and it is as necessary in the full harmony of music as his."

"Yes, yes, of course, I grant all that. But it isn't

just now the relative value of feminine and masculine gifts that I am concerned with; it is the *difference*: and it is just this difference that your modern woman is intent on disputing. She insists on calling the fuzz on her chin a *beard*. She tries to swell her soprano into a trumpet note; or, to speak plainly, she is ambitious of applying her little fireside principles to the management of society in general; she brings forward her tame little conventional back-parlor standards and offers them to men as iron-clad ethical principles; she wants to measure the globe with her tape-measure, and pluck sin out of the world with a pair of tweezers. Now, that is what I object to. I object to effemimation. I object to the spread of superstition. Their hands pull backward. Their legs are made for short steps, and not to leap over chasms. They are incapable of dealing with facts. They can't find their happiness, except in pretty illusions."

"But you can hardly call that a feminine weakness. We are all more or less tarred with it. I believe as you do, that there is nothing more beautiful in life than that perfect sanity of mind which can look the dreariest facts in the face without recoiling, or taking refuge in the world of phantasms that we call the ideal; but there is really nothing more difficult. I confess that ever since I passed out of boyhood I've been trying to do that very thing, and I've come to the conclusion that it is against nature, and the privilege of very rare, very well-balanced minds to hug their ugly facts to their bosom, without ever attempting to gild them a little, or trick them out with the tinsel of the imagination."

"But that's quite legitimate; that's the essence of poetry. I am not at all objecting to that. Life would be very dull if there was nothing in it but the multiplication table. The rose is as much of a fact as the cabbage. I am speaking of the deliberate preference of the false to the true, which is the chief characteristic

of the feminine intellect. Most of them are capable of giving you as their reason for belief in illusions and false doctrines that they wouldn't like to believe anything else. I heard a woman, who was accounted very clever, say once that, for her, the chief argument for immortality was man's intense desire for it. Such a desire she was quite sure couldn't exist without a possibility of its fulfillment, as if every day of her life she hadn't a score of wishes incapable of fulfillment. It is this making of their desires and their immense vanity, the touchstone of truth, that leads them into all those silly vagaries of sentimentalism that every sensible man ought to despise. Modern civilization, however, has decreed that woman is man's equal and comrade, and we must shorten our strides and take mincing steps to make the gait comfortable for her. And in taking it easy along with her, we, too, have become weak. Not to shock her by the truth, we make hypocrites of ourselves. We feign to blush at our nudity, we speak an emasculated language, full of euphemisms and circumlocutions. We cease to love the strong, in a maudlin pity for the weak. We build asylums for idiots, and let our scholars die in obscurity, or set them to serving these same idiots. Now don't misunderstand me. I think I am as capable of pity as any soft-hearted woman of them all, but I don't misplace it. I don't project *myself* into the situation of an unfortunate child, and fancy that he feels exactly what I would if I were in his situation, with all my present feelings, matured and sharpened by entirely different surroundings. But that's what women do. Sensitive, vain, emotional, fastidious, they get up cases of pity, exactly as the novelist does, by a play of the imagination. They have no conception, for example, of the fact that a hardened criminal is capable of feeling the fiercest joy and pride in the crime which he has committed. Oh, no—they picture him in tears, rent by remorse, as they would be in his situation; they recall the sleepless night which they

passed after having slapped Eddie in a momentary fit of anger, and they take up a collection or beg flowers from their neighbors to cheer up the poor fellow. Bah! it makes me sick to think of it!"

I listened in silence to this harangue. I had read Schopenhauer, and was very familiar with this attitude of contempt towards women, and I remembered that Schopenhauer, like all men who degrade women, was at the same time their slave; and it seemed to me that this bitter contempt is rather the cry of shame and indignation at the slavery to woman than the calm judgment of the intelligence.

"Then you haven't a very high idea of marriage on the basis of companionship?" I said tentatively.

"No—not at all—for the simple reason that the primary object which unites two people in marriage, when it is properly entered into, is not companionship. Marriage exists for the sake of the family. If there is any sanctity in it at all, it is the children that bring it. They are at once the excuse and the recompense for disillusionment, if there has been disillusionment, and they are the bond of a closer union, when the marriage is happy. There ought to be the strongest public sentiment against any other object of union, so that the union of old people or that of a young man with a woman too old to bear children, or incapacitated for bearing them, would be regarded as something shamefully disgraceful, and the young man made to feel that he had committed a crime against his young manhood. But what is the fact? It is women who create public opinion in this matter; and marriage is their stock in trade; their way of getting a living or being taken care of. I once boarded in a hotel where a woman habitually spoke of her husband as her meal-ticket; and the other women laughed. I said to her: 'So you sold yourself for a mess of pottage.' She wasn't insulted; how could she be? Delicacy in women! My God! and yet, if you tell them the naked truth about love, even the woman who sells herself for a meal ticket will re-

volt and call you a brute. You see, it is excessively humiliating to a woman's vanity to think that the attraction which she has for a man has nothing in it particular and stable, but that all women possess it to a certain degree. Yet, in her heart, she knows that it is merely a matter of physical charm, and she tries to preserve it with the appearance of youth as long as she can, knowing very well that her empire is over with wrinkles and gray hair. The movement to prolong her empire by making herself valued for her intelligence comes from those women who cannot hope to rule in the empire of flesh—a thousand times dearer to women, and to man, too, than that of the mind."

"I think you exaggerate. But don't you see that the very thing which you complain of—marriage being a sort of trade with women—comes from your excluding them from any other way of earning a livelihood. Years ago, I met a brilliant young woman in Paris, a beautiful and charming woman, too, who complained bitterly of the restriction of a woman's sphere of action—and pleaded as eloquently as ever you could for that freedom which, you say, is so necessary to your happiness. I shall never forget her. She had taken to public life, and showed remarkable energy and decision in everything she did. In any situation that required particular adroitness, it was always to Mlle C—— that her companions turned."

"Mlle C——! Mlle C——!" he repeated musingly; "where have I heard that name before? Oh, yes, I remember now. I wonder if it could possibly be the same woman. About eleven years ago—yes, it was '50—I happened to spend the winter in Paris, when a remarkable criminal case was going on. The papers were full of it. You heard it talked of wherever you went, and there was a general sentiment in favor of the defendant, who was none other than this Mlle C——. She, too, was a public woman, a communist. She had shot, with intention to kill, an Italian marquis, who refused to acknowledge the paternity of her boy, about ten or

eleven years old at that time, I think, maybe a little older—I don't exactly remember. A handsome boy, his picture was reproduced everywhere, a boy any man ought to be proud to acknowledge; but it seems the marquis was on his wedding trip with a young English lady, with an English woman's sentiments of propriety, no doubt, and it wasn't convenient just then to make explanations. It was easier to deny the whole thing, and carry a bullet in his shoulder."

"She did not kill him, then?" I asked the question with drawling, apparently indifferent deliberation; and my heart was beating like a trip-hammer, and I was trembling like a leaf.

"No; but she had intended to do so. She was finally acquitted. The trial brought out some interesting personal details which created a general sympathy for her. I think she had known some relative of the bride. I am not sure, though. I remember at the time that I was very curious to see the woman, but I could not get into the courtroom. Now, it would be a strange coincidence if she should be the same woman you knew. Do you think she was?"

The agony of this reminiscence made me a coward. I couldn't talk of it, so I answered dryly:

"I think not."

"Well, at any rate," he continued, "there's a very good example of the way in which a woman looks at love. She can't accept it as something necessarily transitory, an appetite that dies in the satisfaction. No, she wants to eternize it, and you may as well try to eternize the lightning flash. Love is not a normal condition; it is a temporary exaltation, a fever of youth that usually passes with it, unless one has the poetic temperament."

"What do you understand by the poetic temperament?"

"The emotional temperament: the temperament in which the feminine element in character dominates. For

there are a great many men who lack the mental characteristics of virility, just as there are a few women whose minds have a masculine vigor, uncommon in their sex. You are a reader of sentimental novels, and not an observer of real life if you believe that the absorbing loves of which literature has given us so many examples are at all common. All these rainbow tints of the imagination, given to a very natural appetite, are entirely wanting in the great majority of men. It is to women that we owe their general recognition. For them it is easier to love with the mind than with the senses, and they are bent upon teaching us to love in the same way. But nature isn't at all interested in this enterprise, and the day on which all become platonic lovers we shall be on the eve of extermination."

He was silent, lit his pipe again, leaned back in his chair and looked at the fire. I scanned the energetic, handsome profile a moment, and thought how cruel the fate of any woman must be who would love him. Was there a feminine fiber in me that revolted at his words?

"And you?" he said suddenly. "Of course you're dead against me."

"Well," I replied with some hesitation, "I don't think I should make the sweeping assertion that love is nothing but an appetite. I should say that it is the recognition of incompleteness, the powerlessness to find one's happiness alone; and the ideal of culture is to be self-sufficient. That is all I know about it. But as for women, I don't share your contempt for them. It is they who bear the burden that love entails; and for that we owe them help and comfort. It is they alone who know the strength of love in its absolute purity and want of egotism. Outside of books, I have known no Père Goriot, but mothers are everywhere. And I don't blame them for trying to escape the empty monotony of that obscure, trivial life of the house-corner which you yourself think so infinitely dreary. They, too, have a right to be self-sufficient and masters of

their own happiness. And to be that, they have the same right as we to a rôle in active life; but I confess that, like you, I do have a little fear of their leaning towards superstitions."

"And you have good reason for that fear, for that penchant is ineradicable. It comes from their need to love and to believe themselves loved, if not by any human creature around them, then by some invisible creatures that their fancy creates. And what cowards they are! always listening to 'they say,' always molding their conscience to the shape of popular opinion, never seeing below surfaces, capable of denying Jesus Christ if he squinted, or had a bowleg."

"Oh, pardon me—you are quite mistaken. You forget Wilkes's host of female admirers and the reply of one of them to the criticism that he squinted: 'Oh, not any more than a man ought to squint.' And you've forgotten your Shakespeare, man!—and Richard the hunchback:

"Was ever woman in this humor wooed?
Was ever woman in this humor won?"

"No, Graham. That's just the other side of the same flimsy shield. Tongue-led, as I said, fickle as flies! You're a wise man to hold them at a safe distance; for by all I know of men, you have all the marks of a victim about you. Do you never tire of your life in the woods here?"

"No, never. I feel rooted among these pines and oaks, now. Far from being satiated, I find new charms every day. I think, now, that I couldn't be happy elsewhere."

"Ah, that's because you've a bit of the poet in you. How happy one must be whose heart and mind see all things new, the hundredth time; but, on the other hand, you must be susceptible to a great many griefs that I have never known, and will never know. I find that everything is paid for in this world. We never hold

anything valuable that hasn't cost us something. Well, I shall be leaving you, one of these days, in search of fresh fields and pastures new; but I shall always remember with pleasure these fireside chats with you. After all, there isn't anything much better in life than a real conversation, where there is give and take, and absolute sincerity on both sides."

Nearly two years have elapsed since this conversation, and though I saw him several times again, before he went away, I have often recalled it as if it had been our last. There was something of condescension in his attitude towards me, mingled at times with an expression of regard. On the whole, I think he liked me, or, at any rate, trusted me. He liked to utter his ideas, and I was a good listener; but there were times after a conversation with him when I thought less of our race and more of this silent nature over which the good and bad days passed without eliciting either a smile or a sigh. With all his contempt for society, he was not independent of it. A life which has no other aim than pleasure wants a fixed center about which it can tranquilly turn. It rushes headlong like a meteor, that traverses space in a self-kindled blaze, and falls at last as a heavy stone.

But while I am judging my brother, an inner voice reproves me sharply, and asks me:

What are you doing with your own life?

What aim are you proposing for yourself?

You wished to broaden, strengthen your own mind, to find in it the happiness which had escaped you. You have despised the soul that limits its desires to the massing up of money. But the soul that amasses the riches of thought and feeling is in duty bound to extend their influence. The miser who has hoarded and concealed his treasures all his life enriches somebody at his death; his egotism, then, is not so far-reaching as that of the man who conceals the treasures of his heart and mind, for they perish with him.

But what riches have I found that I could share with another? Is it a heart free from all bonds that can deeply wound it, so that its joys and sorrows henceforth come from itself? That would be the dreariest poverty, in the eyes of most people.

Is it a mind open on all sides, fearless, assimilative, quenchless in its thirst to know? That requires leisure—and, it may be, natural capacity.

And, after all, what a proud, vain boast to say that I am free from all ties, when the past can still make my heart tremble with pain or with joy, and when at this very moment I am stifling a cry in the depths of it for human companionship, human love! There! I have written it out plainly. He is a coward who lies to other men; but he who lies to himself is not only a coward, but a fool. And why should I lie to myself? This is the meaning of that strange restlessness which drives me here and there. The breath of spring has set the sap of life to stirring in leaf and branch, and I feel it mount in me, too. I wish to *live* deeper, deeper, even at the price of pain! There, I feel better, having written it out; but *mon Dieu!* what folly! what folly! to be attacked with the malady of youth at forty—to want better bread than white bread, sweeter honey than the bees make—wings instead of feet! What! do I really wish to find happiness elsewhere than in tranquility and work? Do I wish to recommence all the pain of the past? No, it is recalling it all in detail in this way that has set my pulses throbbing feverishly. I could never love again as I loved her. The power to love is dead in me, and how happy I am, when all my wretchedness is nothing but a passing restlessness, which an hour in my garden with a hoe and a spade will quickly dissipate! How sane work makes a man! Leisure is the mother of all the follies. No—I have reached the summit of the hill of life. I have the western sun in my face, the shadows lie all behind me. I am master of my fate.

PART II

AFTERNOON AND EVENING

CHAPTER I

A VOICE FROM THE PAST

November 16, 18—.

I HAVE just read over the preceding page, written thirty years ago. How young, and how full of the pride and confidence of youth it is, although it was written long after youth had passed! To-day, I could not write so confidently, if I knew I were to die to-morrow. Shouldn't I have one day still before me? and isn't my old heart still capable of feeling pain at the death or the grief of those whom I love?

No, man is never master of his fate, and it is well that he isn't. I ought to record that here and prove it. To finish with an air of triumph like that is to falsify the truth. Life is a growth; it isn't finished at forty. Sometimes it is only well begun. I like these sturdy lines of Browning's, perhaps the cheeriest he has ever written:

“ Grow old along with me!
The best is yet to be,
The last of life, for which the first was made:
Our times are in His hand
Who saith ‘A whole I planned,
‘Youth shows but half; trust God: see all, nor be afraid!’

“ Then, welcome each rebuff
That turns earth’s smoothness rough,
Each sting that bids nor sit, nor stand but go!
Be our joy three parts pain!
Strive, and hold cheap the strain;
Learn, nor account the pang; dare, never grudge the throe!”

Perhaps I should do better to destroy this little record of my life, but I have not the courage. It is a part of me, and to destroy it would be a kind of suicide

of which I am not capable. No, I will finish the record. That will be an occupation for these gloomy days of rain and wind that keep me indoors longer than I like.

My memory is still green, though my sun is touching the horizon; and I will go back, now, where I left off. Two weeks after finishing the little record of my life, I received a letter which read as follows:

“MY DEAR UNCLE,

“I am going to give you a great surprise, but I hope that it will not be an unpleasant one. I am coming to see you; coming to live with you; yes, I really am, and I wish you knew just how much pleasure the thought of it gives me. Now, don’t think that it is just a girl’s caprice which has moved me to such a resolution. No, I have thought it all over very seriously. I have been wearying here a long time, since dear mother’s death; and it was she, herself, who first gave me the idea of it.

“A few days before her death she was talking quietly with me of my future, when she would be gone. ‘You will be very, very lonely for a while,’ she said. ‘You have an affectionate nature, you need to love and to be loved, but there is no one to whom I should like to see you give your life at present; besides, marriage ought not to be entered upon hastily, even when love urges one. There are so many other things to think of besides love, but we think of nothing else when we are young. Your father and I made a love match, and you see how it has turned out.’ She was holding my hand and she pressed it, and tried to smile bravely,—poor dear mother! ‘If your uncle weren’t so far away, your Uncle George, I mean, I should say: Go to him, be a comfort to his old age, cheer his home with loving kindness. I have not seen him since he became a man, but if he has kept the promise of his boyhood he has a warm big heart and a quick mind. You would not weary with him, he is a great student, a great traveler,

and if he can find happiness in a wilderness, it is because he carries it with him. But he is too far away. What a pity! You would be a great comfort to each other I am sure. You would be a loving daughter to him, as you have been to me; and you would know in him what a father's tender care is.'

"Dear, dear Uncle, I cannot tell you how many times I have thought of her words, till they have come to be a sort of inspiration urging me to action. Too far? For cowards, yes; but I am not a coward. I have some of *your* blood in my veins; and I can go where you have gone; and I can live where you have lived. I shall love your pines and oaks far, far better than the dust and grime of this great city of Glasgow. And I shall not be solitary where you are, for I love you, though I have never seen you. You have revealed much of yourself in your letters, alas! too rare; and I shall know how to make you love me. I am not one of your gay society girls; dear mother was an invalid all her life, after my birth; and I have tried to be some recompense by taking care of her. That has made me more serious than most young women are. I love books, too, and I shall try to share your tastes and mingle my solitude with yours in a sweet filial affection. You will be my father, I shall be your daughter. And yet in that word, father, there may be a suggestion that will frighten you. Don't misunderstand me, please. I shall never be a burden on you. My mother has left me enough to be independent, in a very modest way, of course; but, still, independent. It is not therefore a *refuge* I am seeking with you, it is not charity that I want. No—shall I be quite frank with you? It is a *care* that I want; someone to whose happiness I can be necessary. You don't need me? You have everything you want? Wait! wait! The sun does not shine every day. You must have had days of illness, days of sadness; or if you haven't, you *will* have them, for nobody escapes them, and on such a day, you will say, 'O if

I only had somebody here to give me a glass of water, to smooth my pillow—to care the least in the world, whether I live or die.'

"Well, dearest, I want to be that somebody—that faithful, untiring nurse, that careful housekeeper, who knows how to direct affairs. Because, although I am a bit romantic (at least mother always said I was), and a bit of a dreamer, building for myself a thousand pretty castles in Spain, my feet patter very solidly over the humble floors of my home, and my hands do not love idleness. And, then, I am not a child. I am twenty-three, you know.

"But you are a little proud, aren't you? and you dread very much seeing a young woman start out alone on so long a journey, don't you? And I must not think of coming, must I? You see, I anticipate all your objections, and in order to avoid being disobedient, I must start out at once; and the day you get this letter I shall be under the Stars and Stripes, and, God willing, not so far away but that in a few hours, or days, at the longest, I can send you a line saying: Meet me at such and such a train.

"All my arrangements are made. I have made all the necessary inquiries about reaching you. My trunk is packed, my ticket bought. I have nothing to do but wait the arrival of the steamer, and to say to you: I am coming. *I am coming.*

"P. S.—I forgot to say that I have remembered the request you made in one of your letters for some seed of the broom and whin. I shall bring you a little box full of seeds; and we shall plant them together, and watch them grow."

I do not know which emotion was the stronger in me after finishing this letter—astonishment or anger; but it was anger that, in the end, gained the upper hand.

"What an insufferably impudent woman!" I said

to myself. "How in the world did she get it into her head that I was so decrepit and old that I needed a guardian? or such an idiot that I could not be company for myself without weariness?" And here, I believe, that a mild oath escaped me, and that if my amiable niece could have seen me, she would have gone to the end of the world rather than to me.

"Crazy creature!" I continued in my mental ejaculations. "What shall I do with her? I have only one room, and what with my books and other things, it isn't a bit too large for me, and I don't want to divide it by a partition. No, I'll take her to a tavern, show her a little courtesy, for the sake of her mother, and then send her back where she came from. Ordinarily, a woman of twenty-three is more of a girl than a woman; but at any rate she has some sense of decency, and doesn't take a door off its hinges to get into a house; but this one has half a century of brazenness. She thinks I mean to father it? No, my daughter, there'll be no mingling of solitudes in this case. I'll do my own pillow-adjusting, if you please, and get my own glasses of water; and your little feet won't ache from all the pattering they get on *my* floors." So ruminating, my first anger passed away in a sudden consciousness of the absurdity of the whole thing. It seemed a huge joke. I had a good laugh at myself, and then I tried to forget it. But in spite of all that I could do, the fact that she was on the way to me would intrude itself disagreeably, and I went to town morning and evening in search of the dreaded letter that was to announce her arrival. At last it came, putting an end to my suspense and exciting my mirth by an expression of solicitude about me, couched in such terms that it was very evident to me that she imagined that I was an infirm old man. My vanity was a little piqued at that, and I took more than ordinary pains with my dress in preparing to meet her. I wore a black mustache; and my hair of the same color hadn't a white

thread in it. My perfect health, the regularity and tranquility of my life made me look much younger than I really was. I had bought a new straw hat and a light-colored cravat, and, in a new suit of well-fitting clothes, had rather a spruce air, intending thereby to give my affectionate niece her first lesson in the folly of leaping to conclusions.

As to her appearance, I tried to form some idea of it by recalling what her mother had been, but could evoke no other image than that of a robust, florid young woman, like so many of the women of our moist, northern country, with the energetic, bold, masculine air of the young women of our day.

Therefore, I really cannot say which of us was the more surprised, I, to see descend from the car at the station a slender, graceful young girl with a quantity of rich brown hair and a very pretty, attractive face that turned rose red when her eyes met mine; or she, searching with her eyes among a few old men, idling about the platform, for her uncle, who was to meet her and who did not come, and shrinking timidly from me when I approached her to ask:

“Excuse me, but are you Miss Abby Crawford?”

“Yes, sir,” she answered, “I was expecting my uncle, Mr. Graham, whom I do not know by sight; perhaps he has sent you for me?”

I do not know what diabolical idea of playing a trick on her came suddenly into my head, for without thinking at all, I gravely replied:

“Yes, Miss, he has given me that pleasure. He is not able to come after you to-day, and wishes me to take you to a tavern.”

“He is ill,” she said with consternation, then excitedly, as if talking to herself, rather than to me, “Oh, I knew it very well. There was a something, I don’t know what, which impelled me to come; as if I had seen him ill and needing me”—then more quietly, and with great firmness, she said—“No, sir, I shall not go

to a tavern. Will you please take me directly to him?"

I could not help smiling; there was such a pretty expression of anxiety and sympathy in the sweet face looking up into mine.

"I beg of you, Miss Crawford, don't have the least anxiety," I hastened to say. "He isn't at all ill, I assure you. In fact, he is as well as I am; but he isn't at home just now; but counts on being at home to-morrow, and you will see him then."

"Oh!" she answered, evidently disconcerted. "He knew that I was to come to-day, or he couldn't have sent you for me. I don't understand it."

"Well, I am very sure he will explain it satisfactorily when you see him. You didn't give him time to prepare for you. You know, or rather you *don't* know, that his whole house consists of only one room."

"Oh, yes, I see," she answered, rather dejectedly, I thought. "I am afraid I shall inconvenience him at first, and I really didn't mean to put him to the least trouble."

"And you aren't—he'll be delighted to see you. You have a trunk?"

"Yes, here's the check."

I took it, along with a small valise that she carried in her hand, and conducted her to the waiting-room, while I went to see after her trunk.

I confess that for a brief moment the idea came to me to have it sent out at once to my home, but I dismissed it as puerile and untenable. I really couldn't accommodate her at present, and was I really willing to do so? I wasn't prepared yet to say yes; although the agreeable surprise she was to me was working very much in her favor.

I returned to the waiting-room.

"The tavern isn't far from the station, Miss Crawford. It won't take more than five minutes to walk over to it."

She rose from the bench saying: "I am really very sorry to give you this trouble."

"Excuse me; it isn't a trouble, it's a pleasure, and I hope that I may be fortunate enough to see you again, with your permission."

A blush spread over her face, and lowering her head a little, she said timidly:

"Do you know my uncle very well?"

"Yes. I know him as well as any man can know another."

Here my conscience commenced to make me feel a little uneasy. Had she been the impertinent, forward creature I expected, I should have taken a malicious pleasure in deceiving her, but it seemed really too bad to trick a modest, trusting girl; so to avoid any more compromising questions, I changed the subject by saying:

"If you have had my experience, you must have replied twenty times to the question 'How do you like America?' before having taken as many steps on its soil; so I'll vary the question a little by asking you how you expect to find life in a forest supportable, after the variety and movement of a great city like Glasgow?"

"Oh, you don't know me. You can't imagine how tired I was of that variety, which so soon ceases to be agreeable and becomes only confusion. I am really so glad to exchange all those endless lines of brick walls and the broken glimpses of sky for these beautiful trees, this uncultivated soil, and that broad stretch of blue above me. My uncle lives right in the heart of a forest, doesn't he?"

"Yes; of course, he has cleared off a good bit of land for gardens and orchards, but there's no other roof in sight of his own."

"How pure the air is here," she continued. "All along the road I kept the car-window open just to have that odor of the woods about me. I never saw such magnificent trees before. I have seen nothing but parks

at home, you know ; and I had no idea how beautifully tangled and wild an untouched forest is. I longed to be out in it. But just look there ! What a pity ! I am all turned round. The sun is setting in the east and I shall see it rise in the west ! ”

She had stopped a moment to look at the sky, magnificently colored with sunset hues, and I very nearly betrayed myself by telling her what splendid sunset views I had at home looking out over the bay. The crickets commenced to chirp in the grass. The dewy freshness of evening filled the air, and the dust lay damp and heavy on the roads. For fear of being greeted by the villagers, who all knew me, I had avoided the main street, and taken an unfrequented by-path that ran along a clover-field, from which rose a delightful odor, and I am sure that she exchanged it as reluctantly as I, for the narrow plank sidewalk that led to the village inn.

I had already engaged a room for her the day before, and in giving her over to the charge of the porter, I took my departure rather brusquely, assuring her that I would call in the morning about eleven o’clock to conduct her to her uncle’s. She thanked me heartily, hesitating after the word Mr., as if she expected me to announce my name, but I did not do it.

I went into the village immediately to buy provisions for the morrow ; and putting them all together in a large basket, I started home. A singular exhilaration had taken possession of me, something like the hope and light-heartedness of youth, and a sensation of superfluous physical energy that made me very glad to have a good three miles’ stretch of road before me. And what a delicious walk it was ! one of those beautiful hours that grow rarer as we grow older, in which we are hardly conscious of the body, except as the senses serve the mind. Never before had I felt so intimate a joy in the depths of these woods ; never before felt myself so closely one with all this exuberant life. The dense shade cooled my flushed face, the herbs crushed

by my feet exhaled an aromatic odor. Sometimes a bird uttered a melodious cry over my head, sometimes a squirrel darted across my path, then stopped to look at me, its bushy tail curved over its back, its black eyes sparkling like two glass beads; and I, too, stopped to look at it, and smile, as if it were something human, that knew my heart was overflowing with tenderness and joy. Who can tell the cause of these sudden renewals of feeling in us, after days and weeks of stagnation? Is the source of them weakness or strength? I shouldn't ask the question, if I had not observed that these exaltations are followed by corresponding depressions; and that the normal condition of mind is not one of emotion but of tranquility. But whether they be of morbid origin or only the superb expression of perfect health, they are none the less exquisite hours, in which we seem to condense more of life than in weeks of an ordinary existence. My eyes, so long unused to tears, grew dim from time to time, with pure excess of feeling; not thoughts, but vague dreams and memories of my youth crowded upon me thick and fast, and I was astonished to find myself at home so soon.

I opened the door of my little log hut, asking myself how it would look to a woman, and answered myself at once, that it looked bare. Having discovered that my pretty Indian rugs required a good deal of shaking and cleaning to keep them presentable, I had taken them from the floor and put them away in a large trunk. I got them out at once and laid them down again; and they added a touch of comfort and brightness to the room. But the huge fireplace that in winter lighted and warmed the whole room, yawned very black and dreary along the western wall; and I reflected some time before I could solve the problem of transforming that dark chasm into a thing of beauty. My eyes wandering about the room, encountered a fine, large, clay water-jar of Indian workmanship, very prettily ornamented with a geometrical pattern in white and brown; and it sud-

denly flashed over me that I might fill it with the large spreading branches of the huckleberry, growing here into a very handsome shrub with small, bright, glossy leaves and pretty, reddish-brown stems. I went after it immediately, and soon returned with my arms full, put it into the jar, which I placed in the center of the fireplace. It added just the touch of beauty and grace wanting, and I couldn't forbear thinking how pleasant it would be to have somebody near to whom I could say: "Now, doesn't that look pretty?"

I liked the effect so much that I thought I might enliven other parts of the room with a green sprig here and there. I cut some graceful branches from the pine with pretty clusters of cones and tacked them on the wall. As I prefer the wild flowers to the cultivated ones, I determined to rise early the next morning and scour the woods for its prettiest treasures; for I thought they would give a more harmonious effect to the room and its rustic furnishings than the garden flowers. I had suddenly grown critical and fastidious, for I wished the room to please her. I even went so far as to dust my books with a cloth, a proceeding to which they were not at all accustomed, for my method of dusting under ordinary circumstances was simply to blow the dust off the one book which I happened to take down from its shelf.

I went to bed much later than usual, but I couldn't sleep. The sweet exaltation continued, and I heard my clock strike three before I fell asleep to dream that I was a boy again, traveling in Switzerland with the companions of my youth. I thought that Richard Glenn, Lady Margaret and I were scaling a mountain, when we saw projecting from a ledge of rock on a steep and difficult descent a bunch of brilliantly-colored flowers. Lady Margaret uttered a cry of admiration, and clapped her hands with pleasure. I rushed forward, bent upon getting them for her, when she turned quite pale, begging me not to attempt so difficult a thing, which meant,

perhaps, the risk of my life. But I was intoxicated with the thought that she cared even so little for me, and I resolved to show her that her slightest wish was more to me than life. I took another step forward, and felt the ground crumble beneath my feet. My head struck the rock, a dazzling light flashed before my eyes; and with that, I awoke, to hear my clock striking six, and the sun shining full upon my face. My head ached. I moved my pillow out of reach of the shaft of sunlight. A great languor invaded me, an inexpressible sadness, a vague sentiment of impending ill; then all at once the events of the preceding day rushed into my mind. I leaped from my bed, took a cold bath, and before breakfasting struck out for the woods. It was a magnificent morning, fresh, dewy, the air resinous and tonic; and in a few moments my headache was gone, and I was quite myself again. I found some superb orchids of that beautiful kind commonly known as the moccasin flower, or lady's slipper, with the large, inflated lip of an exquisite whiteness dashed with spots of crimson. What a pretty sight it would be to a little lady from the town. Involuntarily I smiled with pleasure, anticipating hers. I found, too, some beautiful ferns to mingle with them and some delicate trailing vines to complete my decorations, and came back home happy as a boy, and with a boy's appetite, which I satisfied with some soft-boiled eggs, bread and butter, and a good cup of coffee.

No lady's maid could have taken more pains to make a room pretty for her expected mistress than I to make this room look inviting to my little lady. Strange! but for the life of me I couldn't think of her as my niece. I hadn't been able to trace in her the least resemblance to her mother, and it had been so long since I had known close family ties that I felt myself, as it were, unrelated to anybody. For me, therefore, she was only a pretty young woman, unusually attractive, because of a certain freshness and naïveté wholly femi-

nine, and alas! growing rarer and rarer from our present popular systems of co-education. The thought of receiving her into my home as a companion of my solitude, if it had crossed my mind as a possibility, in the curious exaltation of the evening before, seemed impossible now in the bright light of morning. But how should I tell her so? Would she herself not feel it to be so, when she learned the truth? Well, there was nothing to do but leave it to the happy solution of chance, which has a trenchant way of cutting Gordian knots and loosening spells, often quite superior to the clumsy efforts of design.

She was waiting for me in the office when I entered the tavern. She had put on a pretty dress of light blue muslin, trimmed in narrow white bands, which gave her even a more girlish air than she had had the day before, in her simple gray traveling suit. She blushed as she held out her little hand timidly to me, saying:

“My uncle did not come with you? I thought perhaps——”

“He will be at home when you get there, and will be very glad to see you. But he wishes me to warn you not to expect elegance. It is impossible to live more simply than he does.”

“Yes, yes,” she answered, “I shall like it the better for that. But to tell you the truth, I hardly slept last night for thinking that I may have done the most foolish thing in the world to come here, and to suppose that I could be any comfort or help to him. But I love him, although I have never seen him. If I had known where to find him, I think I should have risen in the night to go to him. It seemed such an age till morning, and then I began to fear that perhaps he wouldn’t like me, that I should seem a stranger to him. Tell me, frankly, do you think I could please him?”

She looked at me eagerly, her sweet eyes full of tears, her pretty mouth trembling. Think how it moved

me! I hadn't seen a woman's tear since many a long year. A sudden tenderness for her filled me. I should have liked to pet her as I would a child, and I said hastily:

"Of course you will; you would please anybody; but, although he isn't a heartless old man, perhaps he will not please you. You have made for yourself an imaginary uncle, who certainly is not at all like the real one. Perhaps you had better see him before we take out your trunk and your valise." I saw that she had ordered them brought down. "Did I tell you that he lives about three miles from the village? I always walk when I go out there, but I will order a carriage this morning, if you prefer it."

"No, please don't; I think I should rather walk. I am a good walker, and it is so pretty about here; and then you can tell me a little more about my uncle, his tastes, his habits, and I shall be getting a little acquainted with him."

I gave the necessary orders for the trunk and valise to be returned to the room which she had occupied, and we left the tavern.

We had a charming walk together. She was not of those people with whom the least silence produces a vague uneasiness and embarrassment, as if a secret want of harmony had begun to reveal itself. She was perfectly free from all affectation, the most natural woman I think that I have ever known. I believe that she had no idea how altogether pretty and attractive she was; for her beauty wasn't of that pronounced and striking type which at once draws all eyes to itself. She had the unconscious frankness and fresh and vivid curiosity of a child; and her pretty little cries of surprise and admiration at the beauty of the forest showed a lively sensibility to natural charms that augured well for our enjoyment together. I began to understand how it had been possible for her to undertake so adventurous a journey. Her courage was simply innocence, perfect

unconsciousness of danger; her confidence wasn't impertinence, it was a superabundance of feeling. Her whole young life had passed in loving and caring for another. She couldn't conceive of life happily spent in any other way. The color came and went in her cheeks, and soon we were chatting together like old comrades. It seemed to me now, as if I had always known her. She continued to ask me questions about her uncle, and it grew more and more difficult for me to conceive how I was ever to undeceive her without wounding her deeply, and I turned her attention from the subject as often as I could, purposely lengthening the walk and trying indirectly to show her myself and my real tastes, that I might in some measure step into that imaginary uncle's place. To do that, I was always very careful to explain that my feelings were entirely in accord with the uncle's whenever I was forced to dwell on his characteristics.

At last we approached the house—a plain log hut in the midst of pines and oaks, on an eminence overlooking the beautiful bay. I had trained a wisteria vine over the logs, and heavy clusters of purple blossoms hung from it.

"How pretty! How pretty!" she said in a low voice full of feeling. "But the door is shut. Do you think he is at home?"

"Yes, follow me. Don't be afraid."

I hastened forward a step or two, opened the door and bade her enter. Now that the time had come to reveal myself, my heart beat furiously. I hated to blurt the truth out. I wished with all my heart that she would guess it; but she did not have the least suspicion of the truth. She hesitated before the open door and said faintly:

"Will you please tell him that I am here?"

"He knows it"—I hesitated. I was about to say "Abby," but that familiarity seemed an impertinence, yet. She must know me before I could say that. Then

a sudden fear seized me. Suppose that she wouldn't believe me.

"Come in," I said, taking her gently by the arm. Then I went directly to the table on which stood a bottle of ink and some paper. I have a very peculiar hand-writing, quite unmistakably my own to any one who has seen it, and seating myself at the table, I deliberately wrote these words:

"You are welcome home, and your uncle is the happiest uncle in the world to call so charming a girl his niece.

"GEORGE GRAHAM."

She had followed all my movements with the most painful suspense; I saw that, by the twitching mouth and reddening brow. I smiled at her reassuringly, rose and put the note into her trembling hand. She read it and burst into tears. Then I felt that I had been very cruel, and that my foolish little joke was no joke at all, but something very serious.

"Abby, my dear girl, don't cry; don't, my dear. Listen to me," and I took her two hands with which she had covered her face, and forced her to look at me. "I only meant it for a little joke, and I detest myself for it now; but you seemed to make so much of your old uncle, half infirm, that I didn't have the heart to show him to you all at once, quite well and vigorous. That was stealing from you the task that you had been kind enough to find a pleasure in."

She drew her hands from mine, and the expression of shame and grief on her face grew more intense.

"Oh, how you must despise me for being such a silly fool! How could I make such a mistake! Can you forgive me? If you only knew how I am punished, I believe you would be sorry. Remember, I am very, very far away from home," her eyes filled again, and

she began to sob bitterly. Then my heart went out to her, and I said:

"Don't say that while you are with me. Look around you, it is all very simple, very poor, but what there is of it is yours. You are mistress here as long as you like. If I did not bring your things with me, it is because I wasn't sure that you could be content to share my tranquil life, so remote from the stir of other lives. I could not be sure that you would care for me, as I really am, but if you could say to me now: 'Uncle George, this *does* please me, and *you* please me, too,' I shall be the happiest man in Washington Territory. Can you say it, Abby Crawford?"

I had not had the remotest intention of saying anything of the kind; but carried away by the sympathy of the moment, I had put so much warmth into my words that I finished by persuading myself that I desired nothing so much in the world. And my desire increased in proportion as I saw that she wasn't at all inclined to accept my offer.

"But, but,"—she stammered, "don't you see that it doesn't at all seem to me that you *are* my uncle?"

"Do you doubt my word?"

"No, no—you have proved beyond a doubt who you are, by that note. Besides, who else could get my letters, and know my name, and that I was coming? No, I feel that you are an honest man, but I don't feel that you are Uncle George. I have not had the slightest premonition of a tie of blood between us. Do I seem to you to be your niece?"

"You say so, and I believe you, as you do me."

Her face cleared a moment.

"There! that's it. Don't you see? You feel exactly as I do, this something impossible, which—which—would make it improper—" she hesitated, coloring deeply.

"No, no," I answered quickly. "There is nothing

impossible, nothing improper in it. Sit down, please. I am going to speak very frankly to you."

"Yes, yes, do," she said, seating herself in the chair that I offered her, and looking at me with an expression, avid of truth. "You are not my uncle, then?"

"Listen to me patiently. Yes. I *am* your uncle. I have a bundle of your mother's letters on that shelf yonder. She was my favorite sister; and the only one of my family with whom I have corresponded. I have still the little letter, written twenty-three years ago, in which she wrote me from Glasgow of your birth, and as I was only a boy, then, she said she had given me another little sister, that she hoped would love me as much as the big sister had."

"Did she? did she? Can you show me that letter now?"

"Yes. I'll get it for you."

I got out the bundle of letters, tied up with wrapping cord, and easily found the letter referred to. She read it with streaming eyes.

"But I never saw you," I went on, "and we men, in general, need something tangible to care for. You wrote me, that though you had never seen me, you loved me; but I could hardly understand that, and I confess that when I first read your decision to come, I thought it—"

"Yes, I know," she interrupted, "something *frightfully* bold. I see it all, now, but—"

"No, not at all. You are incapable of boldness; but like all young girls who live in the world without belonging to it, perhaps you are a little romantic; but I made as great a mistake in imagining what you were like as you did about me, and I only wish that you had been as agreeably disappointed. I fancied you a large, robust blonde, noisy, talkative, aggressive." For the first time since her entrance into the house, a smile passed over her face, and I was so far encouraged that I sketched the figure a little more ludicrously than was

necessary. "And you," I went on, "you saw in me a venerable old man dragging out a solitary existence without any of those charms of domesticity that make the consolations of old age; and like a good little girl that you are, being solitary, too, you came away out here into the heart of an American wood to see if out of these two solitudes, united, you could make a charming companionship. And you were quite right! and though the old man isn't quite so old as you thought him, he is none the less solitary, and is delighted at the idea of so sweet a comrade, so charming a sister. Come, Abby, let us confess that we have both made a delightful blunder, and ought to congratulate ourselves on it. And now, take off your hat, my girl, and help me get dinner; for if our walk has done for you what it has for me, you are very hungry. You are going to laugh at my primitive way of doing things, and show me how very much I needed you."

I held out my hand to take the hat, which she was removing with nervous hands, and she said, in a very low voice:

"You are very good."

"No. I am only very happy, and I have only one wish, and that is to see you happy, too. Wait, I've been talking about setting you to work and you haven't yet seen what a fine view I have from this south door; because, though there is not very much inside the house, there is a very great deal out of doors."

I opened the door and we stepped out. Before us stretched the blue waters of the bay, sparkling under the summer sun, its beach below us showing huge barnacle-covered rocks, and strips of shining sand. On the southern horizon towered the Olympic range of mountains, and bounding the waters of the bay on the west rose gentle heights of dark green with a serrated outline of spiked firs against the blue sky; and close at hand was the heavy timber of gigantic firs, cedars, spruces with tangled undergrowths of brake and fern.

Towards the east towered the huge dome of Mt. Baker covered thick with snow, but so far away that it was visible only on clear days, a sort of phantom mountain that came and went like a dissolving view.

The sensitive nature of the young girl answered to this beauty in a cry of joy. She forgot her disappointment and embarrassment, as if by magic.

"Oh, how beautiful! how beautiful!" she exclaimed. "How admirably you have chosen the site of your home. And you can never feel alone here, in the midst of so much beauty."

"No," I answered frankly, for I wished her to know me thoroughly, now. "I have lived a great deal in forty years; for, living goes by thinking and feeling, doesn't it? And I have learned to be company to myself. I remember once hearing an old Scotch woman say to someone who sympathized with her, thinking she must be lonely in her solitary home among the mountain passes, 'No, I never weary. There's such a kind feeling comes from the hills.' It was her homely, yet expressive, way of saying what Byron says so beautifully:

'There is a pleasure in the pathless woods,
There is a rapture on the lonely shore,
There is society where none intrudes
By the deep sea, and music in its roar.'

And yet it is good to have someone like-minded near by, to whom one can say how charming this dual solitude is."

"Yes," she answered, her cheeks aflush like the wild rose. Then after a short silence, during which her eyes were feeding on the varied beauty of the scenes about her, she turned to me as if she had made a sudden resolution and said to me very gravely:

"Do you really forgive me?"

"For what?"

"For being here."

"It isn't a question of forgiveness, but of gratitude. I thank you from my heart for being here. And will you forgive me for the silly little joke, growing out of my vanity, I dare say, that I played on you?"

A smile lighted up her face, so serious the moment before.

"Oh, yes! yes! You wouldn't have seemed any more my uncle to me if you had confessed at once; and I should have been so miserably unhappy about my mistake all night long, that I think I should have taken the next train out of town and never seen you again; and yet, I—I—liked you." She covered her face with her hands to hide the deep red rushing to the roots of her hair.

"Dear girl!" I said.

"No, no!" she exclaimed, hastily dropping her hands and looking at me fearlessly. "Don't speak to me like a man of the world; or say anything to me that you will wish unsaid to-morrow, or the next day, or the many days that are to come. That would be too frightfully cruel. Let us talk without fear to each other in the frankest language of our hearts, as if we stood both of us, as God knows we may, on the edge of an abyss, and one step forward would send both of us into everlasting darkness. You have known the truth longer than I; you must have reflected." She was speaking rapidly now, trying with all her might to suppress the signs of the emotion which she felt. "You know that I came from Scotland hoping to care for you as I had cared for mother, to be a faithful companion, sharing the dark days more willingly than the sunny ones. God only knows how I came to make this fatal mistake of supposing you much older than my mother. I didn't know what hint of your life made me think you must be worn out, a melancholy recluse, yet capable of intense feeling and joy; that I gathered from the few

letters of yours which I have seen. There are certain sentences in them that I know by heart, written to console her. Here is one of them:

“Not for anything in the world would I have missed the keenest of my sufferings, if I could choose to blot them from my life and make it all as sunny as a cloudless June. They have been my university, in which I have learned the most intimate secrets of the human heart, the broadest knowledge of life.”

“And do you know what I’ve always thought! It is this: Joy, too, can teach, and somehow, a certain shyness kept me always from asking much about you; and I thought you were attacked by one of those maladies of the soul which waste the body, as well as make desolate the heart. And romantic as I suppose most women are, I felt my heart drawn toward you. When I was a very little girl, I used to think about you, and say to myself: When I’m a woman, I’m going to him.”

“Bless your dear little heart!” I exclaimed.

“I shall be his daughter. He shall not miss in his life the devotion of a woman, who——” Her eyes filled, her voice choked, she could say no more. My heart melted toward her in a deep sentiment of tenderness and pity. I felt what a rich gift she was giving me; I was profoundly grateful for it, and for nothing in the world would I have had her leave me now. What right had stupid conventionalities or silly and selfish fears to intrude themselves between us? She pleased me to the innermost fiber of my being. She could enrich my life by sharing it in a sweet and chaste companionship.

Once more I took the little trembling hands in mine, and drawing her toward me, lightly touched her forehead with my lips. She hid her face upon my shoulder, and wept to her heart’s content; and I let her cry unchecked, knowing well that the nervous tension which she was under was best relaxed by tears; and I ca-

ressed the little head, murmuring affectionate words such as one speaks to a penitent child whom one loves. I was happy, with a healthy, serene joy, full of hope. Like a lightning flash, our life together rose before me, innocent as that of a brother and sister—full of the sweetness of love without the sting of passion. My home would be, now, a home in the full sense of the word; for it would shelter the sweet figure of a woman to encourage me in my tasks, to say good-by when I left the house, and bid me welcome when I entered. I could easily build two more rooms to the cottage and divide the large room into two.

Suddenly the young head left my shoulder, and the dear face looked up at me, smiling through its tears.

"You see," she said, "I am only a child, after all, to be taken care of myself, and you—you—are *not* my uncle."

"I see nothing but this," I answered. "You are here, where you belong. I *am* your uncle; and though I didn't love you before I saw you, I do love you now, and I don't know why, any more than you do; and I don't care. I see, too, that you came here to take care of me. Well, that suits me exactly. I *need* to be taken care of. Just think of it. I sew on my buttons without a thimble. Isn't that dreadful? Did you bring your thimble along? If you didn't, I shall get you one when we go to town. For I don't mean to let you go. Be sure of that. The house isn't quite ready for you, so I'll take you back to the tavern this evening; and give orders to the carpenters to begin work to-morrow, and then in two or three weeks we'll have our house-warming, and invite the squirrels and the robins to see how happy we are, in our new nest. If I am not the morose old man whose solitude you came to console, I am, at least, a mature man (who has days when he feels very young, to-day, for example), a solitary man at whom fate has not smiled often enough to spoil in him a warm appreciation of a simple and pure companionship. I

shall know how to be a faithful friend, for I have served my apprenticeship in that; I know how to be grateful, for my heart has not yet grown cold; and I need you, for I need, once more in my life, to know perfect happiness. You are right. Too much rain makes my fruit spoil and mold. They need the warm sunshine. So do I. It has rained enough in my life. Shine out, O sun of love, warm and bright; let me feel what it is not to shiver any more! Tell me that I do not too much displease you, and that I may hope to be a dangerous rival to that old uncle, who, to tell you the truth, begins to make me feel a little jealous, just now. You've made a hero out of him, and generous joy in the excellence of others, is rare; and I'd rather you loved me with all my faults, than him."

She gave me no reply beyond a bright smile, and the assurance, again, that I was "good." I told her that I wasn't, but that I should let her go on thinking so; as we all need a superfluous stock of illusions in youth to take us a good way through life, until we are able to get on comfortably with the memory of them. Then she reminded me that I said I was hungry, and that I wished her to help me get dinner. Would I show her where I kept my things?

I turned towards the house, arguing in this question an assent to my hopes; and at this moment a lovely little squirrel that I had tamed darted towards me from the corner of the house, but stopped at some distance, looking timidly at my new companion.

"Come on, Jacques," I said, stooping and holding out my arm, encouragingly. "Don't be afraid, you are going to have two friends now instead of one. Come on, come on, and let me introduce you to your new mistress."

With a bound he was on my shoulder, whisking his tail in my face, and peering down at the young girl by my side.

"You dear little thing!" she said, putting out her

hand to stroke him, but with another bound he leaped to the ground and scampered away.

"He is afraid of me. What a pity! I am going to take away all your wood friends."

"Oh, no! They will soon get used to you. You have but to hold yourself perfectly still among them, making no advances, paying no attention to them, and finally they come to think of you as a part of the forest like themselves and have no fear of you. And now you are going to laugh at my primitive style of cooking. About ten or twelve years ago—oh, no, it's much longer than that, I bought a little portable stove from an Italian, such as they use in the streets of Naples to do the family cooking. I liked it so well that when it wore out I had another made by a tinsmith after the old model. With a little charcoal you can get enough heat to boil water, fry a beefsteak, or an egg. As for my bread, a woman in the village makes some fresh loaves every Saturday. But now that you've come I'll buy a regular stove. Do you know how to cook?"

"Yes, that is about all I do know except taking care of the sick. Oh, what *lovely, lovely* flowers!"

She had just noticed my floral decorations, made in her honor.

"I never before saw a flower like that. What is its name?"

I gave her its name, explaining that it was a wild flower, of which we had many beautiful varieties in the woods.

"I can't offer you an exquisite menu," I said, approaching the little stove to light it and put on some water. "Would you like coffee or tea?"

"It makes no difference. Whatever you like best will please me most."

"Then I must make both, to see which you prefer."

"No, no. I beg your pardon. I like tea best."

"Very well, you shall have it," and I lied in adding that I preferred it, too.

"Well! I knew I had forgotten something. Do you know that I haven't such a thing as a table-cloth or a napkin to my name? The necessary has occupied me, to the exclusion of everything else."

"And these flowers, and that beautiful green bush on the hearth?"

"Were put there to please my lady."

"I thank you," and she lowered her eyes.

"I know now what I can do. I have two big sheets of white wrapping paper. They'll do very well for a table-cloth, won't they? You see," I continued, unwrapping some bundles and spreading the paper on the table, "luxury entered the world by means of a woman."

"But I beg of you not to inconvenience yourself for me. I should love to sit down with you just as you are accustomed to do alone."

"But I wouldn't like it all; and your uncle is a very selfish old man, quite tired of his homely way of living; let him put on a few extra touches for you, and he'll enjoy the novelty of it immensely."

"As you like."

She helped me set the table, and when she saw me use a large white clam shell for a ladle to scoop out sugar and salt, and employ other primitive substitutes for dishes, she laughed merrily, saying it seemed like playing at housekeeping, and protested against any innovations that would banish them from use.

"I like that glistening, pearly-white surface. It is so much prettier than metal; and cleaner, too, for it won't tarnish. But how do you get this smooth, white surface on the outside?"

"I boil them in wood-ashes. By the way, there's a fine clam-bed a little way down the bay. I must teach you how to make chowder."

Then we sat down to dinner before the open door and window that looked out upon the yard, with its luxuriant grass, now ripening in the summer sun; and beyond it, vistas of orchards and glimpses of the forest.

Around us the great silence of nature, broken only by the song of a bird or the cry of a squirrel, or the dropping of a cone on the roof. We might have been Adam and Eve in some western paradise before the fall. A great joy, innocent, foolish, it may be, took possession of me. I seemed to have found my youth again, with all its happy carelessness. She followed all my words, my gestures, my gaiety, smiling, laughing, stammering some broken words at intervals, and finally she exclaimed:

“How strange! how strange! Punished or blessed by my audacity, which?”

“Of us? But I needed you!”

“You are younger than I. Tell me the truth, are you quite sure that you never felt alone here?”

“Alone? Look at my companions,” and I pointed to long rows of shelves filled with books.

“Yes. I see. But a book can’t laugh with you, thank you, and tell you that you have given it pleasure.”

“Nor quarrel with you, nor deceive you, nor abandon you. But you are right. Flesh and blood are better than paper and ink. I haven’t felt lonely for more than a few minutes at a time, because I have met no one in many years whose company I preferred to my own thoughts. You have come, and you please me. Why? I don’t know. You don’t disturb my solitude. You give me a sense of enlarged personality. You add to my happiness. I feel that you might become indispensable to it. And in that case, I shall have trapped myself again; I who came out here in search of liberty. For you are woman, you are young. You will wish to be a wife, a mother, and one day you will leave me. But why stain to-day’s blue sky with to-morrow’s clouds. You are here now. Let me be wise and enjoy the present.”

“Yes, and enjoy it fearlessly,” she answered, “for there are no cloudy skies for you in that direction. But”—she hesitated, blushed, then continued, “is *my* sky

clear, with regard to you? How do I know whether you are free to receive me here as your only companion? Do you not think of marrying some day? The uncle I came out to live with had no intentions in that direction."

"Then I am that very uncle."

She looked at me a moment, then shook her head with decision.

"Do you know that it seems to me the absurdest thing in the world to call you uncle? and do you know further, that I'm getting so I almost hate the name? Isn't that dreadful?"

I laughed. I didn't like it so very much, myself.

"Call me George, then. We shall be George and Abby to each other."

"Brother and sister, as my mother predicted."

"Yes, brother and sister. Are you agreed?"

"Yes."

I extended my hand, and, without hesitation, she put hers into it and returned the cordial pressure that I gave it.

This agreement seemed to remove a certain constraint and embarrassment in her manner, and soon we were chatting together like old comrades. The hours flew by on wings. It was evening before we thought the afternoon had well begun. I had shown her my books to acquaint her with my tastes. We had spoken of the necessary changes to be made in the house. She was very much opposed to the idea of dividing the large room into two. She wished it exactly as it was, with its luxury of space, its accommodation to my tastes. It must still remain my room, and the living-room, if I wished at all to please her. Thus chatting, it was nearly sunset before we left the house to return to the village.

Shall I ever forget that delicious walk with her in the cool of the evening, and the sweet intervals of silence that interrupted our talk, a silence that was filled

to each of us with the consciousness of a larger life, and deeper sympathies? An exquisite peace, a deep, full, breathless peace, a sense of spiritual harmony, a quiet, intense joy that filled us with a sense of the richness of life—and yet could find no other expression for itself than a pressure of the hand and a long look into each other's eyes;—if there is a heaven, and joy in it, I think it must be like this.

CHAPTER II

DREAMING ONCE MORE

HOME again, after making arrangements with the carpenters, I went late to bed and slept fitfully. I was making plans for the future. I had become all at once a social man. I thought of home with her, and wondered how I could make it charming for her. I had decided to yield to her request and leave the large room intact to serve as a sort of salon, for I felt sure that this young girl, with her social instincts, would soon attract to herself all the young people of the village. I would, therefore, add three rooms, one of which would serve as kitchen and dining-room. The rooms should all be spacious, well aired, well lighted, and nothing omitted to make them convenient and comfortable, without putting them out of harmony, by too much elegance, with the rugged beauty of their environment. Too many rooms would simply mean an additional care without added convenience. I have no sympathy with the modern itch for huge piles of brick and stone. I am not without my ambition; but there are some things in which I am very willing to be outdone. I never identify myself with my furniture and think the more I have of it, and the larger place I have to put it in, the more I amount to as a human being. Therefore, I am very willing to have others outdo me in houses, dress, furniture, land, and money; but I am very unwilling that they should excel me in cleanliness, decency, virtue, and wisdom. I would have my house my shelter; and my intelligence my ornament.

Yet, with all that preference for simplicity myself, I asked myself a thousand times what a woman's tastes

were, and in what way I could make a room attractive for Abby. How should I be able to find anything really beautiful and in good taste so far from the centers of civilization? All my own tastes were for the time being in abeyance. They had ceased to occupy me. My books, that only a few days ago had been all the world to me, my friends, my solace, my delight, spoke to me no longer.

I have often thought, since, how many of the activities of civilization a woman absorbs. It is she who makes luxury possible. It is she who is the materialist, and who makes us men, who are the idealists, materialistic in our turn. I am often reminded, as I wander through the great department stores of our cities, of the countless superfluities that the vanity and helplessness of women have called into existence. Yet, to this very vanity and helplessness thousands of honest workmen owe their livelihood.

At the end of three weeks the house was completed, furnished, occupied, for I had put the largest possible force of men at work on it; and Abby and I commenced our solitude *à deux*. And we were happy, perfectly happy. I asked nothing more of destiny. I would not have changed Abby in any particular. She had a great deal of good common sense, in spite of the tinge of romanticism in her nature, for which, indeed, I was very grateful, for it had sent her across the ocean in quest of her uncle. In fact, if we consider a moment, we shall find that the most beautiful discoveries, and great movements of humanity are due to this powerful lever of action—romanticism; and we should stagnate, and sink eventually to the condition of brutes if we were controlled by no impulses not to be found in some form in the multiplication table. She was an excellent housekeeper, quick, thrifty, willing; loving her daily tasks, as if they were the reason of her existence. Though fragile looking, she was strong, elastic, recovering quickly from weariness. She had a beautiful

cheerfulness, almost childish, finding her pleasures, as I did, in the simplest things, a stroll on the beach, a softer, brighter cushion of moss on some fallen tree trunk, an iridescent shell, and the glory of the morning and evening sky. It was always fête day with her, rain or shine.

She thought me extravagant, though not wasteful, and took possession of the fruits which I refused to sell, exchanging them for commodities in the village, assuring me that I had no right to give to those who were able to buy; for, I not only lessened my power to do good to the really indigent, but encouraged a propensity to get something for nothing, which did nobody any good. Then, too, I was wrong in not wishing to be rich, in a perfectly legitimate way; for, riches mean power, and I was not one who would abuse it; and all this was said and done in the gentlest way, so that almost unconsciously, I finished by yielding to her judgments, and I began to wonder how I had ever managed to do anything right without her. And then she was so pretty, so neat and fresh, always, that it was a pleasure simply to look at her. She wore no jewels whatever, not even a ring; but she had exquisite taste, and whatever she wore adorned her.

But this good little head that knew so well how to calculate and govern in the household, had not the slightest taste for the great, austere truths of the sages and philosophers. She cared little or nothing for books, although she really thought that she did. She was devout, but without austerity. Religion was for her a kind of poetry, into which she escaped when realities were cruel or ugly. She could not have told you why she believed. Her faith was a part of her ancestral heritage, and recalling my mother, whose opinions I did not share, I respected her faith and wouldn't have destroyed it for the world. But she, on her side, could not be content with my indifference to what was so sacred to her, and this little note of discord, in the

otherwise perfect harmony of our relations, pained her deeply.

"Do you never go to church, George?" she said to me one Saturday evening, when we were taking our favorite walk along the edge of the wood, looking out on the magnificent sheet of water that reflected the evening sky.

"No," I replied, "we go to church, don't we, to lift ourselves above the vulgar cares of this world, and feel ourselves more intimately allied to the great unknown that we call the Eternal Good? Well, little girl, it isn't in the churches that I feel those flights of gratitude, and an aspiration toward a more complete, more noble life, or that wonderful interior calm so near to ecstasy, in which we lose the consciousness of the body, except as an excuse to keep the soul on earth, and all the coarseness in our life, all our baseness slips from our shoulders like Christian's burden, and we rise new-born to innocent joys, as if the best of childhood had recommenced within us. I explain myself badly. I believe that this feeling of inner purification is the essence of what we call religion, and it is also the essence of poetry; but, it is a feeling that never comes to me in churches; but always in solitary places like these woods and the bay, yonder. It is an exaltation that comes from the contemplation of beauty, power and perfection. That is why men who have been very far from perfect themselves, but who have had a sensitive temperament, have frequently felt it. Burns expressed the feeling admirably, when he said:

"I never hear the loud solitary whistle of the curlew in a summer's noon, or the wild mixing cadence of a troop of gray plover in an autumn morning without feeling an elevation of soul like the enthusiasm of devotion or poetry." And elsewhere he says:

"There is scarcely any earthly object gives me more, —I do not know if I should call it pleasure, but something which exalts me, something which enraptures me,

than to walk in the sheltered side of a wood or high plantation in a cloudy, winter day, and hear the stormy wind howling among the trees and raving over the plain. It is my best season for devotion; my mind is wrapt up in a kind of enthusiasm to Him who in the pompous language of the Hebrew bard "walks on the wings of the wind."

"I do not know why an elevated sentiment like that, Abby, which disposes a man to be better, is not worth the same sentiment awakened within the walls of a church and often dying away outside of them."

We had seated ourselves on the fallen trunk of a huge pine, covered with moss, enriching with its decay the soil around it, where delicate wild flowers grew. A cool breeze blew up from the bay.

She looked at me silently a moment, her sweet face full of seriousness.

"Yes," she said thoughtfully, "it is worth just as much. You are right, as you always are. But I, unfortunately, do not belong to those favored souls who can feel beauty in the form of a noble thought, or an enlightening and purifying emotion. Pleasure, yes, and intense pleasure at times, I feel from it, but not that calm you speak of—rather a restlessness, an eager desire to possess it more intimately. Then, too, I am not capable of enjoying anything *alone*, I need the personal element to enter into my enjoyment in some way. For example, how very beautiful it is here just now, at this hour. Look at that rich crimson cloud floating on the surface of the water, just as it floats in the sky. Look at those long beams of rich yellow light that pierce through the leaves of the trees and light up those thick patches of moss so vividly. These pretty spikes of golden-rod that seem to have been steeped in the sun-light—aren't they beautiful? Yes, I feel all this to the innermost core of my heart; but, George, if you weren't here, if I could not hear your voice, or touch your

hand"—she slipped her hand into mine, interlacing her fingers with mine—"do you think I could feel it at all? No—I couldn't. I should be miserable alone, as you were, before I came. I need somebody with me before I can enjoy anything. I should never be the first to break a pathway in any direction. I must follow where a path has been made. It is the same thing with religion. I should go all astray were I left to my own devices. I need before me the broad pathway that my ancestors have trodden. There is something sacred to me in this dust, which has felt the pressure of so many feet. The strange, the novel, frighten me. Why? I am a woman. That explains it all, doesn't it? I used to think we women quite as intelligent, quite as brave and strong as you men: I don't think so any more."

She drew closer to me, and I lifted to my lips the little hand that I held. She was very dear to me, and growing dearer every day. She drew her hand away quickly, and brusquely rose from the old log, saying with feverish haste:

"Come, come, the sun is setting, the bay is calling us. I want a boat-ride, don't you? You haven't yet taught me to row, and you promised me that. It has been too warm, but it is cool this evening; let's not lose the chance. Live near a beautiful sheet of water like that and not know how to row, isn't that ridiculous?"

She was walking rapidly towards the beach, refusing any help from me in descending the steep cliff, running when she could, stopping short to recover her breath, and to push back the thick masses of hair which the breeze had disordered, laughing merrily, but not looking at me, except with furtive glances that shunned mine persistently. A mood, a girl's caprice.

Arrived at the water's edge, she seized the oars, saying:

"I have watched you carefully when you rowed. I half believe I can row now. Won't you please sit over

there at the end, and let me have the middle seat? I want to show you that my muscles are not so weak as my ideas."

I obeyed her, and though she was a little awkward and slow at first, soon the irregular and jerky movement grew measured and rythmical. She rowed a long time without looking at me, though I sat facing her. Her eyes strayed over the bay and the wood. Slowly the crimson colors died from the water and the sky, and gave place to darker hues. A light blue mist half concealed the shores with a soft veil, indescribably pretty. A great silence fell around us. She suddenly let fall her arms, the oars rested in their locks; then, for the first time looking at me, she said in a low, hushed voice:

"This is the calm you were speaking of." She paused a moment. I did not reply. There was no necessity for words.

"Do you know," she continued after a few moments, "that sometimes my former life seems to me all a dream—and that instead of five weeks, it has been all my life that I have lived in this forest, and looked at this blue water—with you. You don't believe in Providence. How sorry I am! But I do. I was brought here for something, some great trial, it may be, I don't know. But I should like to be worthy of it. You have a great influence over me, too great, perhaps, but don't destroy my faith, I beg you. I feel that somehow it is intertwined with the very roots of my being, and could not be plucked out without killing me, body and soul; and that whatever happiness this world could offer me, it could never fill the void of a world without God. You make me happy, I was going to say supremely, perfectly happy; but I do not breathe so freely,—how shall I explain myself—nor with so much security, since I have not been to church. It has been many Sundays now since I have missed going. Of course I could not go on the journey, but, settled here, I think it isn't right of me to neglect this duty."

"Very well, my girl, you shall go to-morrow," I said very quickly. "I shall take you there myself. But why didn't you mention it sooner?"

"Why? because I did not know that you were so good, and I so wicked; and I wanted to fit myself entirely into *your* way of living. I feared to weary you, to inconvenience you by any marked change, and then I was always hoping that you would say to me some day, 'Abby, we'll go to church this morning,' but you never said it. And now, I know that I can't be good in *your* way, I must be good in my *own* way, and so—" she stopped and smiled at me in her sweet youthful manner, so full of charm.

"You were wrong to wait for me to guess what is necessary to your happiness, Abby," I said gravely. "Now, never forget that I do not wish to control or restrain you in the least thing in the world. I wish you to live in perfect liberty here. Dear as you are to me, I wouldn't hold you a moment if you wished to go. It would grieve me to lose you, but it would grieve me much more to know that you were unhappy with me. In friendship, as in love, there is no law. That which unites us to those we love is not a compact, it is an attraction that comes and goes without our will, we know not how, or when."

I was silent, and she repeated softly: "You are right; it comes and goes, we know not how, or when. You think, then, that we are not responsible for our feelings?"

"Up to a certain point, yes,—beyond that,—no. We can weakly yield to our inclinations and let them increase beyond our power to control them, or we can vigorously combat them, and free ourselves from their influence."

"And it is the end, always, that counts, isn't it? If the drink leaves a bitter taste in the mouth, it is folly to drink it, no matter how sweet it tastes, at first. Isn't it so?"

"Perhaps," I answered dreamily. I was thinking of my youth and of that sweet draught of friendship and love which I had drunk, and whose after-taste had been so bitter. But wasn't it worth it? "I am not sure, Abby, that it is wise to be always counting the cost of things. We should miss an immense amount of life if we did. It is better to live with a certain generous fearlessness and take the bitter with the sweet."

CHAPTER III

TRYING TO KEEP STEP TOGETHER

I WENT with her to church the next day, voluntarily doing violence to my own sentiments to avoid wounding hers. At first I found a real pleasure in this little sacrifice, for it really was a sacrifice for me; but, at the end of a few months, the pleasure had changed into an insupportable weariness. I dreaded the approach of Sunday as a schoolboy dreads his tasks. If I could once have heard a stirring or energetic word; if I could once have been reminded that the man to whom I listened had had his life enriched by any valuable experiences to give weight to counsels and reflections that it would have been a privilege to listen to, I would have gladly gone. But there was nothing but the same dry, threshed straw, Sunday after Sunday, till the dust of its chaff got into my throat and stifled me. He had not even lived enough to know the meaning of *any* life, let alone that of the great moral genius whose teachings it was his business to spread. Without capacity enough to doubt, he dared to speak of those deep painful experiences of every thoughtful mind with the contempt of shallow ignorance; and at last it became impossible for me to go any more and keep my self-respect. In short, if Abby couldn't be good in my way, I found it just as impossible for me to be good in *her* way. We both thrived on a different mental diet. I felt myself in a false position, which grew base the longer I persisted in it, so one Sunday, at the church door, feeling unusually rebellious, and unable to sustain an hour of torture within, I said:

“Abby, if you like I will stay outside to-day: but I will come for you at the end of the service.”

The quick color surged over her pretty face, and she answered quickly:

"Yes, yes; don't stay, and don't wait for me either. There's no need of it; I know the road home just as well as you do."

We were so dear to each other that we were each conscious of the slightest movement in the fluctuation of feeling between us. I felt that I had wounded her; but before I could answer a word she had disappeared. If I had yielded to my first impulse, I should have followed her into the church, but some indomitable principle in me held firm. I knew that, in the long run, the sentiment of liberty and progress was stronger in me than anything else. It was putting on again the swaddling clothes of my infancy to seat myself there, every Sunday. The high-pitched, whining tunes of the hymns, the pompous, nasal drawl from the pulpit, irritated every nerve in me. All the best of me was in rebellion: but to be quite frank, I was very much more unhappy away from Abby, and sure that I had hurt her, this one interminable Sunday morning. Would it never end? I suffered horribly at having made her suffer. I felt something weak and unbalanced in me, something that hurt me with an intensity far out of all proportion to the cause. I trembled like a child when, at last, I saw her appear at the church door, and hastened forward in joy. But she held her little head very high; her cheeks were flaming; her eyes sparkling, and her whole air was very different from what it usually was. She saw me, but quickly turned her eyes away, and tried to avoid me; but I was at her side in a moment. She feigned great surprise at seeing me, and said, in a cool, unnatural way:

"Why! is it *you*? I thought you had gone back home."

"No! no! and Abby, you didn't think anything of the kind. You knew that I was hanging around here like a whipped cur, miserable without you."

We were walking rapidly in order to escape the crowd. Besides, it was quite chilly: for it was a raw, gray day in December, and the trees, stripped of their leaves, were whipped to and fro in a sharp wind.

"And why," she asked, raising her eyes for the first time to look at me, "why should you be miserable without *me*?"

"Because I had hurt you. No, little girl, don't deny it. You and I must always speak the truth to one another. Unless we do, we shall be a thousand miles apart, though as near together as we are now. Take my arm, please: we shall walk more easily arm in arm in this strong wind. There! that's better, isn't it? Now, confess to me, like a good girl. I did hurt you, didn't I? And I am sorry for it."

"Yes," she said, "and I was wrong to feel hurt; but how does it happen that I am so sensitive with regard to you? I never used to be like that, but a word from you, no, not even a *word*, just a look, a little absent-minded or cold, cuts me to the heart, wounds me *horribly*: and I begin to imagine all sorts of silly things. Yes, I *know* they're silly: but I can't help it—no, I can't help it for the life of me. I say to myself, 'I am in his way. He is tired of me. Far from being necessary to him, I am an inconvenience. I keep him from enjoying his books and his thoughts; he would like me to go away'; and then I get *so* unhappy, so *very* unhappy."

I heard a sob: the tears were rolling down her cheeks. A strange joy seized me, an intoxication of gaiety.

"My little one, my little pet," I said, patting the hand that rested so lightly on my arm, "you make the joy of my life. Without you, I should have no light, no warmth. I wonder now how I ever found these woods habitable without you, or could content myself with books alone, for companionship. You are more to me than anything else in the world. Don't forget that, even if I shouldn't say it to you every day. But under-

stand me well. I can't be *you*. I can't at forty, think the thoughts of a young girl in her twenties. You find your food and drink, where I should die of hunger and thirst; and you must bear with me, if I cannot live on a rose-bud and a drop of dew. I need bread and meat. It is not my fault. Nature made me so. And I do not ask you to be one whit different from what you are—and least of all should I like you to resemble me. I shouldn't find the same charm in you if you were an echo of myself. Let us respect these differences between us. I am satisfied with you. Try to be content with me as I am."

"Content with you!" she repeated, wiping the tears from her eyes. "Oh, I am only *too* content with you, and that is my great happiness, and my great misfortune. Be patient with me. I don't know myself any more! Ah! how fine that wind is! It does me good to hear it rage like that. Don't you like these tempests, sometimes, in which you seem to feel a soul that answers to your own?"

"What! Do you mean that there is anything like that rage in you, little girl? If so, then I don't know you any more, either."

"No? I am getting wicked, am I not? Oh, I felt so wicked in church this morning. Let's stop here a moment." We had entered the edge of the wood. "Listen how the wind roars among the trees, magnificent, isn't it? *Now*, I understand you and your Burns. This is better than a sermon. If I should become capable of getting what you do out of these things, would it please you better?"

There was in her voice, her look, her gesture something so wild and excited, that my pleasure in her emotion changed to pity. I saw at once that I had to do with an exaggerated sensibility, which might easily become morbid and give rise to painful misunderstandings between two creatures capable of giving each other the purest joy. Young, over-sensitive, romantic, she

could not explain a difference of tastes except in terms of repugnance. She was content with nothing less than a complete harmony between us, on all possible subjects. She suffered at the least appearance of discord between us. If I read in her presence, she felt it a tacit reproach to herself for not being as interesting as the book. Like the poplar that trembles in the still air, as if a tempest were raging, her sensitive nerves vibrated even to the merest suggestion of indifference in me. I recalled this trait of over-sensitiveness in her mother, and knew how it had embittered some of the sweetest experiences of her life. I determined if possible, gently but firmly, to make her feel how cruel unnecessary suffering is, and how essential it is to our comfort to accept things which we cannot change: and persistently dwell on what is cheerful and happy in our lives rather than on what is painful. And as for those who turn their sunshine into gloom, I meant to tell her that they merit the terrible sarcasm of Dante, who portrays them in his Inferno fixed in black slime, because they were sad and sluggish in the sweet air cheered by the sun:

“Tristi fummo
Nell’ aer dolce che dal sol s’allegra,
Portando dentro accidioso fummo:
Or ci attristiam nella belletta negra.”

I knew myself well enough to recognize that beneath all ebullitions of sensibility, there was in me something positive, ineradicable, destined to survive them, and that if I weakened now, we were lost. I believed, too, that deep within her nature, there was an inextinguishable persistent need, that of taking refuge from the crosses of life in faith in an ever present and inexhaustible divine love. Upon this subject, we must clearly understand one another. I knew now, without the shadow of a doubt, that this great solicitude to please me, this fear of tiring me, came from a genuine affection that would

be either our felicity, or our torment; for there is no joy like that of a generous, fearless love; no torment more unendurable than that of a nagging, jealous, petty love, always doubting, always needing to be reassured, tormenting itself in a thousand foolish ways, content neither with renunciation nor possession.

Accustomed to indifference, having lived so long among strangers that I accepted mere courtesies with gratitude, and was content with toleration, I was intensely grateful for this warm young affection that had come into my life. But I did not wish it to enter a crisis, whence it must come out mutilated, scarred with suspicions and dissensions. I dreamed of a tranquil love, a sky eternally blue, without the shadow of a cloud. Yes, I was guilty of that folly; I, a mature man, who thought that I knew the human heart to its innermost fold; I, who knew what it was to suffer from loving too well.

In proportion as Abby lost her coolness, I acquired it, and began to reason quietly with her.

“Abby, answer me frankly. Let us conceal nothing from each other. We have been living under the same roof about six months. Have you been happy with me? Now, don’t answer to please me. You could not wrong me more than that.”

“Happy!” she repeated with emphasis. “That seems a poor little word to express the perfect joy that I feel with you. But”—she plucked a long grass stalk, as she talked, and bent and broke it nervously—“it is a joy that is mingled with anxiety. I am fearing always to lose it, to displease you in some way, tire you, and not for all the world would I do that.”

She turned her face away from me, and we recommenced our walk in the wind among the fallen leaves and dead twigs; black clouds were flying above our heads, and now and then the harsh caw of a crow was heard.

“I understand that perfectly,” I said. “This is

the first time in your life that you have lived intimately with a stranger; for that is what I really was to you, when you came."

"No," she answered quickly, glancing up at me, as she lifted her hand to hold down the brim of her hat. "You were never a stranger to me, from the first moment that I saw you, but—you weren't my uncle."

"Who was I, then?"

"I don't know. Someone whom I had always known, but from whom I had been separated a long time."

"Well, little girl, if you know me so well, you ought to know, also, that it is impossible for you to tire me, or to vex me. But you might make me unhappy, if I saw you unhappy; but in no other way. It is true that I can't see everything with your eyes, and it would be a miracle if I could, for my eyes are many years older, and the eyes of a man, not of a young woman. Life had commenced to teach me before you were born, and do you think that I stopped at those early lessons to stagnate and grow old? I hope not. I hope I have still some few inches of mental growth left me before I die. And you, dear, you have also your apprenticeship to serve in life. You have only well commenced, and here you are, in haste to strip off your pretty illusions and see things in gray, and not rose any more. Believe me, that isn't wise. Let the years do that. They do it quite fast enough without any help. Keep intact in yourself, as long as possible, this pretty souvenir of my own youth. If you can't do it, if you are wretched, because you can't become my echo, or because I can't roll the years from my shoulders, I shall think myself poor company for you, and that we must look for a better comrade among the young people of the village."

"No, no—don't say that please. You don't know how much you hurt me, when you think that I am not satisfied with you."

"Yes, don't you see that works both ways?"

"I wouldn't have you a day younger," she continued, heedless of my interruption, "not a day. You are exactly right as you are, and I see that I am foolish and ungrateful to be over-sensitive. It is just a little weakness in me, George, which you must forgive, and to prove to you that I mean to cure myself of it, I shall go to church alone in future; and I shall be satisfied with knowing you are at home, thinking, perhaps, once in a while of me, and—who knows, sometimes wishing for me, maybe."

"There is no 'maybe' about it, Abby. I *always* wish for you when you are not with me; and I wasn't using an extravagant term when I said that I was miserable without you, this morning. I really was; and I was so impatient for the sermon to end. You have come to mean a great part of my life, little girl."

"Really?" she said, putting her small hand into mine. "Come, run with me a little: how happy you make me! I *love* this wind, don't you? What music it makes among the trees, and how the leaves rustle under our feet! What makes us love that noise? Really, I am still a child. Come!" We started to run together, until by a brusque movement of her hand, she stopped me.

"Enough! Enough!" she cried. "I am all out of breath." Then after a short silence:

"Did you know my father?"

"No. I only saw him twice. I remember that he was an artist, and that he fell in love with your mother the first time that he saw her."

"I adored my father, even when I knew that his neglect made my mother unhappy. He was so very handsome, very distinguished looking: but do you know that with him, too, I was always fearful of giving offense, or being in the way. Now, I loved my mother, but in a different sort of way. My father traveled a great deal, and we were years and years alone together. And I knew her as I know myself. And then I was necessary to her, for she was an invalid. I had to think

and plan for her and spare her anxiety. I had no time to think of myself. But with you, I have no cares, no anxieties; and so I have had to make myself some, I suppose. I have heard, haven't you, of people who are never happy unless they are miserable? Poor Mother! I remember father's saying that to her, one day. Do you know, I really think she grieved herself to death about him, and that he was rarely out of her mind. It is cruel to love like that, isn't it? so very cruel! One day, not long before her death, she said to me: 'I've been thinking over my life while lying here, and there is one thing in it that I deeply regret.' 'Mamma,' I answered, 'you have never done anything in your life that you need to regret.' 'Yes, my daughter,' she replied. 'I regret that I ever married your father.' 'Why, mamma! mamma!' I cried, 'that means that you regret me, too—me, who would do anything in the world for you.' She put her hand on mine, her eyes full of tears. 'My daughter, I bought you at the price of great suffering.' 'And I am not worth the price, mamma?' I said. She smiled at me so sweetly, so reassuringly. She must have been very pretty as a girl, for at that moment she was beautiful. 'Yes, you are worth the price. Marriage with all its degradations, all its cruel disillusionments and humiliations, has one pearl—motherhood.'

"Yes," I answered, "your mother was right, Abby. Marriage means the family. It is the children who bring the magnificent word duty into a man's life. So far as my experience goes, love between men and women isn't a particularly noble sentiment, in spite of all the noble things that are said about it. It is very often nothing but the doubling of a man's egotism, and I am not sure that egotism in pairs is much better than egotism in one. I have known men to be false to the commonest sentiments of honor and friendship to flatter their self-love in the love of a woman."

"George, I don't like to hear you talk like that.

Can it be possible that you, too, have a skeleton in the closet?"

I laughed.

"No, no, my girl. I have no skeleton, if you mean by that some grief that has ossified instead of dissipating with time. I have had my griefs, bitter ones, too; who hasn't? but they have been to me what these dead leaves will be to the trees from which they fall. The soil that furnishes them their nourishment will be only the richer for them."

"Then there is a chemistry of life, an assimilation of sorrow and pain and a transformation of it into fruits and flowers? It is good to remember that. George, did you ever think of getting married?"

"Never."

"But—you—do you—" she stammered and was silent.

I burst out laughing and repeated her words in her manner, adding: "Ah—ha! little girl, you want to find out all my secrets, whether I ever loved a woman, whether I can love again, and all sorts of things, eh?"

"Yes. I should like to know you, *through and through*."

"And do you remember what happened once to a woman who wanted to know too much?"

"Yes, she lost herself, and all the human race."

"And that doesn't frighten you a bit?"

"Not the least in the world."

"But it does me, and I shan't let you run any such risk. Be content with knowing that I haven't found the woman, yet, who would be content to walk with me through the solitudes of life: even you, little girl, won't stay with me very long. One of these fine days, you will be discovering that you have wings, and you'll be flying away to build your nest elsewhere."

"Never; never! Oh, how you vex me when you talk like that, even in jest! How little, how *very* little you know me."

"Do I, really? Very well, then I shall believe in you, until—"

"There is no *until*—don't you remember telling me one day not to darken to-day's sunshine with to-morrow's clouds? Well, then—here *you* are at that, and to-day—to-day is ours."

"You are right, dear, to-day is ours: we'll let to-morrow take care of itself."

But in spite of that declaration, I couldn't help busying myself with the future; not on my own account, but on hers. Here was a young girl who had come to give me the blossom-time of her life, and I could not think of her solitary old age, without an indescribable sadness. Would this passionate young heart, feeling the need to love and be loved, content itself with the tranquil affection that united us? Wouldn't the day come, sooner or later, when she would repent having come, and feel that she had buried her activities instead of finding a healthy outlet for them? If—if—Oh, these thousand ifs of a cruel fate—no, I did not finish the vague thought that troubled me. I resolved to do violence to my distaste for what is so prettily called '*social life*,' and put between us the distraction of new faces. This dual solitude was becoming too dear to us, absorbing us too much. I threw my doors wide open, I invited all the most interesting young people of the village, the school-master, the school-mistress, the beaux and belles of the village and the country, round about; and I did my best to amuse them, and to create a solid bond of union between her and these young people, so eager to receive her into their circle. But when invitations began to rain on her, she refused them all on some pretext or other.

CHAPTER IV

A FIRE-SIDE CHAT

ONE fine January night Abby had just refused a sleigh-ride. The moon was at its full, the snow in fine condition, and it was the young school-master whom she had sent away with the excuse that her head ached badly.

When the door was closed, and we were sitting once more before the fire-place, I said to her:

“Abby, why didn’t you tell me that you were suffering?”

She covered her face with her hands, and laughed merrily. Then removing them, and showing a face as rosy as the blaze from the hearth that lighted it, she said:

“No, don’t scold me, please. I haven’t the least bit of a headache in the world. I have told a deliberate lie, but I really think that there are some lies which are better than the truth. I couldn’t say to him, frankly, ‘No, I will not go with you, because I would a thousand times rather stay at home.’ That would have wounded his self-love quite unnecessarily. And what good would have come from sacrificing my pleasures to go with him? To have done that would have been to lie more seriously than I did. That would have been saying that I preferred his society to yours; and what an unardonably monstrous lie that would have been. I could never have forgiven myself for *that* lie, and I can really forgive myself for the other. It was forced on me. And then, you—you really wouldn’t have liked me to leave you all alone here, now would you? Say ‘no’ quickly and very emphatically, please, do, George, and then I won’t have anything to forgive myself for.”

"But, my pet, if it gave you any pleasure to go, I should willingly stay alone with my——"

"Books! Oh, you are so *horribly* good and polite. I would give anything on earth to see you frown, and hear you say with disgust and spitefulness: 'Abby, chase away all those cursed idiots that come to disturb us. Let us return to our tranquil, solitary life, so full of charm.'

"Haven't you felt as I do, George, that our home for the past few weeks hasn't been a home, but a public house? Oh, you are a charming host. You know how to shine, in making others shine. All the young girls about here are madly *in* love with you; and you seem so perfectly unconscious of it, that I really can't be sure whether you really *are*, or whether you pretend. Really, I feel it to be an indelicate intrusion to come near you, when Miss Thompson is with you. She always seems to be on the point of making you a declaration. She besieges me to have news of you. Your name is forever on her lips. She is *so* glad that I have come, not only on my own account, but to give people a chance to know *you*. You have always been admired, countless efforts have been made to draw you from your solitude, but in vain. I have come to save you—to deliver you over to society: and while she keeps on like that I get colder and silenter, until some day I am sure I shall quite freeze up, and you'll have to throw me into the fire-place to thaw me out. But she doesn't take the least notice of it. Oh, no. Provided she can have *your* name on her lips, she is in an ecstasy, and sees nothing whatever that is going on around her. It is *perfectly disgusting*. And when I think that it's I who have led you into all that!"

I threw back my head, and the room rang with my laughter.

"Abby! Abby! are you jealous of Miss Thompson?"

"Jealous!" she repeated scornfully, and her eyes sparkled like diamonds. "What an absurdity! One

can't be jealous of one's inferiors; and she is a thousand leagues below me. You can't be jealous of fleas and flies; but you can loathe them, and wish to get rid of them or crush them."

"You little savage! Where have you been hiding all that rage, of which I hadn't the least suspicion?"

"Yes, I am dreadful, am I not? but listen, dear George: let's talk straight from the heart again, as we did that Sunday in the woods; do you remember?"

"Perfectly. But do we ever talk in any other way to each other?"

"Yes, when our actions are not in harmony with our will. Answer me frankly without any buts, or any allusions whatever to me. Do you like this bustling of people around you?"

I frowned, I stretched my legs out towards the fire, throwing my body back into my chair, joined the ends of my fingers, holding them before my mouth, and thought awhile, looking steadily into the fire. I could feel that she was watching me intently.

"Now, *frankly*, remember," she repeated.

I slowly shook my head and answered, "No."

"Good! Good!" she cried, clapping her hands and then gently patted my head. "There is one thing I like best of all in you, you really won't lie, when you are put on your honor. Now for another question. Do you think *I* like it?"

"I don't know!"

"George! You know I just praised you for not lying. Now, try again."

"Well, I wanted to know whether you would or not."

"That's an evasion. Once more: come now, be brave."

"I don't think you do."

"Right! but you said you wished to find out whether I did or not?"

"Yes."

"Well, have I shown any particular joy over the change in our way of life?"

"Not any delirious joy that I can see, but I may be blind."

"No, you are not, except to Miss Thompson's intentions to captivate you. But for fear you are not wholly enlightened about my sentiments, I want to tell you exactly how I feel. If I have led you to think that I have welcomed all these people, or have even received them with so mild a feeling as indifference, I have done wrong. No, it is rather a great grief that I feel, when I think that we, who really care for each other—we do, don't we?"

I pressed tenderly the hand that she had slipped into mine.

"Yes, we do. I shouldn't even have asked that question: well, we who care for each other, surround ourselves by people that we don't care for. Evening after evening we are separated; and listen, dear George, it is only *you* who are necessary to me. I don't need all these young people. *You* are youth and joy to me. How is it that I have been so mute, that I couldn't find a voice to make you understand that? It is humiliating to have to say it so flatly, so plainly, but it *must* be said. We can't go on wickedly wasting our short hours in this way. I should like to make you feel it, as I feel when I please, or when I wound you: for I *do* wound you at times. I see that you are afraid of losing me. Yes, let me say it, although it sounds so *horribly* egotistic. You *are* afraid of these few foolish years which separate us, according to you, but which to me seem rather to bring us closer together; for I need this richer life of yours to broaden mine, I am so poor in thought that I need to draw from your surplus store. I know exactly what you have been thinking to yourself. You've been saying: It is wrong and selfish of me to shut her away from those of her age. I shall be generous. I shall surround her with the young and give her the distractions which she needs. Tell me, didn't you say all that to yourself?"

"Yes."

"There. You see that I know you perfectly. Why is it that you don't know *me* so well? Am I a hypocrite? Do I say one thing and mean another? I should like to live in a desert with you, just to be *all* to you, as you are to me. I *never* tire of you; *never, never, dearest.*"

Her voice had grown soft and low, and I felt the tears back of it. What could I do? I believed her. I put aside my fears. I let her know that she, too, was all the society that I needed. I said to myself: Accept the day, live in it, to-morrow isn't yours. When it comes, let it settle its own affairs. And we were happy again. This chaste love in which we held the senses chained by a stern respect was very beautiful; but it was contrary to nature. It was fated to end, but I cannot regret the sweet experience of our life together in which the days slipped away like hours and the months like days; in which the separation during the hours of repose renewed us for each other and kept away satiety. She never wearied me a moment. I had with her a feeling of perfect harmony, a sense of completion, very different from the tumultuous ecstasy of the love of my youth.

But she hadn't, with me, the same tranquil happiness. There were days when she seemed to avoid me, and busy herself with things in which I could take no part. But these days were followed by days of expansion and thoughtless gaiety; and I said to myself, this is what is called feminine caprice; and I took good care not to speak of her moods, believing that it encourages them to take notice of them. There were days when I was sure that she was perfectly happy. She came and went about the house with the lightness of a bird. She laughed, joked, and teased me, with the pretty coquetry of a woman. I have but to close my eyes to see her before me, as she was then.

She loved color, and in winter wore, by preference, some soft wool of a rich, deep red. "It is the color of

life"—she said to me one day—and, indeed, she seemed to warm and vivify everything by her presence. But in summer a pale blue or soft pink were her favorite colors; but she liked also to wear white, in which I preferred to see her. The soft, white skin that flushed so quickly, the delicate, pure features, the little mouth, the well-shaped head, with its abundant hair, seemed to be brought out in stronger relief by white than by any color.

She saw my pleasure in her beauty, and often consulted me about what she should wear.

"Do you wish me to put on my blue dress or my white one? Do you like this hat?"

I have no coldness in my answers for which to reproach myself. To put a cold, flabby hand into a firm, warm one, whose pressure betrays the pulsations of the heart; to stare with a wooden face at another face that smiles; to repulse with a harsh word the sweet word love, are not offences that can ever be charged to me.

I remember, one day, when she had pleased me and I had told her so, she turned quickly towards me, holding out her hand and saying:

"How I thank you for saying that to me. It makes me so sure of you, and I need to feel sure. Do you think me the silliest creature in the world to care so much about pleasing you?"

"No, we ought both of us to care about pleasing the other. I have only you, and you say you wish only me."

"Yes, I wish only you, no one but you."

I believe that she was sincere when she said it. I will be just to her. I will say here, that whatever I may have had to reproach her with, later, I cannot, in this one short year of happiness with her, recall a single serious fault in her; and I am deeply grateful to her for that happiness.

CHAPTER V.

STORM AND STRESS

ANOTHER summer had rolled round again. We were in the first part of July. The weather was unusually warm and dry. I had ceased accompanying Abby to church, and usually gave my Sunday mornings to serious reading and study. She had now charge of a Sunday-school class, and went away earlier, so that I had almost the whole morning to myself. About half an hour before she was due at the house, I very nearly always started out to meet her, so that we had a walk home together.

One sultry Sunday morning she had left me as usual, waving her hand at the last turn in the path before she disappeared among the trees. I went back into the house with a smile on my lips, reflecting on my happiness with her. I passed in review all the little scenes of my life with her, and suddenly, I cannot tell how it came over me, any more than I can solve any other of the great mysteries of life, but I knew that love, not in its sweetness, its tranquility, its security, had come into my life, but love in all its passionate desire, its bitterness, its renunciation. And I knew that she, too, loved me with the love that is cruel. I had become in a moment clairvoyant. This was the meaning of her moods, her caprices. A wicked joy thrilled me. She should be mine. There were countries in Europe, Germany, for example, where marriage between an uncle and a niece is recognized by law. Morality is, after all, only a question of geography. By an accident, we belonged to a country that said no, where Germany said yes. Was it right to immolate our happiness, because we happened to be born in one country, rather than in an-

other? But could I make her believe that? Could I break down the prejudice which I knew would make her feel it a crime to be my wife? I rushed out of doors; I wanted the free air to think in. A prairie lark soaring over my head broke into song. I threw myself on the grass, buried my head in my arms, and sobbed like a child. I was a man, but my heart was still young, unwithered by vice, my conscience quick. I felt the sophistry of my reasoning, dictated by desire. Could I make of my heart a nest of serpents? Could I wake every morning with a new lie on my lips to assuage the stings of *her* conscience? Could I deliberately kill in myself the power to feel all these vivid impersonal joys which nature gave me—the bird-song, the limpid azure of the sky, the wild flower's grace—should I ever know them again? Should I stray in the forest and along the banks of streams, with the mark of Cain on my forehead, because I had murdered innocence? The cynic, the man of the world, would laugh at these confessions. To him, with his sensibilities dulled, or extinguished in vice, these words would seem childish and silly; but in me the fervid noon sun had not yet dried up the dew of the dawn.

All at once I felt the wind blowing, and large drops of rain falling. I rose from the ground and hurried into the house. The sky was black with clouds, and heavy peals of thunder rent the air. I looked at my watch. Abby must have entered the wood by this time. She had taken only her parasol with her, and wore a thin, white muslin. I seized her rain-cloak and a large umbrella, and hastened away to meet her. I felt like an honest man again, and resolved to comport myself like one. I felt that a caress from me, a touch of the hand was no longer innocent, while this fire burned in my veins; and that the more intensely I loved her, the colder I was in duty bound to appear. But my heart beat so wildly that it seemed to me that all concealment of my weakness was impossible.

The rain came on heavily, and the wind blew so hard that I could not keep the umbrella open. I had not walked above a quarter of an hour, when I heard some one laugh back of a group of pines, where the pathway made a turn to the left. It was Abby's laugh. I would have recognized it among a hundred voices; something so youthful, sunny and full of cheer in it.

"Here I am," I cried, hastening my steps to meet her.

Yes, it was she; but she was not alone. There was a man with her, who had taken off his coat to put it around her shoulders. He was leaning over her, holding an umbrella. She had taken his arm and was looking at him and laughing, when I came upon them; and it was he, not she, who saw me first. We recognized each other immediately. It was McKenzie. I felt my face redden in a fit of anger mingled with fear, like that which one might feel in seeing a lamb in the power of a wolf.

He was the first to speak with his accustomed air of polite ease that gave his manners a certain distinction.

"Good-afternoon, Mr. Graham. You are a little too late; but, you see, I have been taking as good care of your niece as was possible, under the circumstances."

I remembered that the first time we met we had addressed each other as if we had just parted. So we did to-day; as if the three years of our separation had been but a few hours. It never occurred to me to say: "Where did you come from?" and "How are you?" I accepted his presence as an habitual thing, and replied:

"Thank you. I have brought her cloak; you can take back your coat."

He took the cloak from my hands, and quickly removing his coat, replaced it by her own mantle.

And Abby laughed and thanked him with effusion, adding:

"And you must go home with us for dinner. Mr. McKenzie has told me that you are old friends, George. What a pleasure it must be to you to see each other again."

"Well, I can answer for myself that it is," he replied graciously.

I felt forced to second the invitation to dinner; but I avoided the question of pleasure, and we resumed our road together, with this difference, that it was I who conducted Abby, her arm drawn through mine.

With the intuition that serves a woman instead of reason, she saw my displeasure, and wishing to conceal it from McKenzie, chattered like a bird all the way home.

"I knew very well you would be anxious about me when the sky began to look threatening, and although I was asked to stop with the McLeods, I wouldn't have done it for anything. I knew that at the worst I could only get thoroughly wet. And what is a little clean rain-water, when you can put on dry clothes at home. Then I was sure you would venture out in the storm to meet me. But, really, I had counted on a storm much less violent. I had just taken refuge under that great tree to wait the end of the heaviest shower, when all at once your friend appeared. Where from? I don't know. The clouds, perhaps. He asked me where I was going, too, and I learned that he was an old friend of yours. Of course, that was introduction enough, and I felt quite at home with him immediately. Do you know that he is very much like you? I don't mean in appearance, exactly, but there is something in him that reminds me of you."

"No," I said brusquely. "We do not at all resemble each other."

"But excuse me," she persisted, "I think you do. You both love solitude, you both came here to make your home among these rocks and trees."

"But you forget that I didn't come here with a family;

and that for him a wife and children helped to people the deserted places."

"Oh," said Abby, turning round quickly and addressing McKenzie, who was following at a little distance behind us. "You have a family, Mr. McKenzie?"

"I *had* one, Miss Crawford. I have no longer a family."

"I beg your pardon," she answered with an accent of sympathy, and she pressed my arm, as a mute sign of regret at having opened a wound. And I, who knew so well his ideas about women and marriage, did not doubt for a moment that he had abandoned them; but, of course, I could not utter my suspicion just then. Certainly, he did not look like a man upon whose head had fallen one of those cruel blows of fate that age more than years do. Never had I seen him look better. Where had he been? What had he been doing? Why had he come back? These were the questions that annoyed me during the walk home. He seemed sincerely glad to see, again, this wood which he had so often scoured, and took pains to show me that he was glad to see me, too.

"I have really missed you," he said. "There are so few people with whom one can exchange a few reasonable words, and the mind needs to stretch its legs, as well as the body. How often I have thought of those long winter evenings, when we used to talk to each other, as if we were thinking aloud."

"How I should like to have been a quiet listener, there," said Abby with enthusiasm.

I did not know what to say. He had disarmed me with flattery; the secret anger which consumed me began to abate a little, and I could even give him a decent welcome into the house. The rain had ceased by this time, but we were dripping wet, and our first care was to change our clothes. I lent McKenzie a light gray suit which fitted him admirably, and caused Abby to say:

"There! didn't I tell you that you were alike?"

What fixed idea was this which she had got into her head, of finding us alike? It annoyed me excessively.

While she was changing her clothes, taking more time to it than we had taken, he had conversed amicably with me, feigning not to notice or, it may be, not really seeing, my hostile attitude towards him.

"Of any other man than you," he said facetiously, "I should refuse to believe this story of uncle and niece, and would congratulate you on finding a companion so amiable and so pretty. I am not sure that she couldn't reawaken in me the belief in a felicity *à deux*, and you know I am skeptical to the last degree on such a probability. But she has such a sweet little taking air with her. Just the sort of woman one would like to pet."

I reddened with anger, and might have replied offensively had not Abby appeared at this moment. Never had I seen her look prettier. She had changed her white dress for a delicate blue, and her sweet face was aglow with health and happiness. She had the air of a woman confident that she pleased, an expression unusual with her.

In a few moments she had prepared a delicious cold lunch for us and presided at the table with charming grace, smiling, laughing, talking pretty nonsense, full of unconscious coquetry. I saw that she fascinated McKenzie. He hardly took his eyes from her. He was transformed into another man—full of deference, and prettily turned compliments.

When he was ready to go, he expressed a lively regret at the flight of time, and asked permission of her to come again, adding with inconceivable boldness:

"I have no need to ask that permission of my old friend, here. I know that, to him, I am always welcome."

I made no reply; and when he had gone, Abby approached me, and stroking back my hair, she said:

"George, you've been a naughty boy. Why didn't you answer your friend? Are you afraid that I shall think him an intruder, and be jealous of him? Well, I shan't. I am really happy to think that you can have his companionship. He may come every day, if he likes. I shall make a friend of him, too; and we shall be an incomparable trio."

I drew my head brusquely from beneath her hand, with an ill-humor I could not conceal.

"You need not cultivate him, on my account, Abby. He greatly exaggerates the extent of our friendship. We tolerated, rather than loved each other; that's about the whole of it. His ideas, his manner of living, are totally different from mine."

"Yes, I know. He is a family man."

"Yes, if you call living in common among the Indians, a family man, he *is* one. As for me, I don't choose to mingle my blood with that of an inferior race, and to abandon my children when I tire of their mother."

She flushed scarlet.

"What! do you mean to say that he was not married?" she asked faintly.

"And you mean by that, that a clergyman did not consecrate his union with a woman?"

"Certainly, there is no real marriage without such a consecration."

"I am not so sure of that."

"George! *Please* don't talk that way. You make me shudder; besides, it isn't like you. You are a little vexed; and I understand very well why. If I had known that this man was a libertine I should not have received him with so much cordiality. I thought, with my stupid way of leaping to conclusions, that he was a widower, and that the sight of a friend had been a real joy to him; and I really think it was. He was really very amiable, wasn't he? I liked him. I thought

you were alike, and that is why he didn't seem quite a stranger to me."

This time she came very near me, threw her arm about my neck, and, stooping, kissed my forehead. I was wild with love of her, and this arm about my neck, this fresh face so close to mine, melted all my resolutions as if they had been wax in flame. I trembled violently, all my being seemed to melt and flow towards her.

"My love! my love!" I murmured. "You *are* mine. Tell me that you are wholly mine as long as we two live. What do the words of a priest matter to us, whom a great love has united?"

Quick as a flash she had freed herself from my embrace, and cried out in a voice to which pity and terror gave an unnatural key:

"O George! George! Don't finish what you are going to say. Let me see you always as you really are, a thousand times better and nobler than I, something to which I can raise my eyes in admiration, without offending God, or the most sacred beliefs of my heart. As for myself, I am a poor weak thing, full of wicked thoughts which I battle against with all my might. But you, you are strong. You will be my guide and my guard. You will help me to vanquish myself. Tell me that you will, I beg of you."

She fell on her knees before me, weeping bitterly, and I could not have harmed a hair of her head. Her sorrow had sobered me. I lifted her gently, and said:

"Abby, you have nothing more to fear. I forgot myself for a moment. You will forgive me; but I shall never forgive myself."

With that I led her to an armchair, and hurriedly left the house, tortured with shame, and blinded with passion, unable to see or feel the right.

I strayed about aimlessly until nightfall; and returned to the house, dejected and exhausted. I note this ex-

perience, because it was the beginning of the most degrading and servile condition of my life. I was no longer the same man; or, rather, all that was base in my nature came to the surface. I became a slave to jealousy, hatred, and one dominant burning desire. But I was so completely under the spell of illusion that it seemed to me that I had never fully lived until now. In the passion of my youth, there had been something exalted, some ever present consciousness of the barrier between myself and the object of my love that chastened and subdued desire. But in this passion of my maturity, I felt no barrier but that erected by prejudice, and I chafed and fretted under it like a passionate spoiled child. My sufferings seemed so unnecessary, so useless; for I knew that she, too, loved me.

That is why she was patience itself with me, during all the feverish agitations, despairs and irritations of this time, growing stronger, as I grew weaker. I cannot recall this period without reddening, as a man must redden when he recalls an attack of acute mania. But it has helped me to sympathize where I might have been harsh; and it has given me the right to speak without feeble sentimentality or criminal indulgence of the most absorbing question in modern social life, the question of the rights of love between man and woman.

The histories of passion are always the same. We give to its intense egotism and absorbing selfishness, the loftiest names; we idealize our weakness and call it strength, and think that it absolves us from all obligations and duties except what concerns itself, alone. We believe ourselves heroes and heroines, because we can feel; and would set the world on fire to warm our beloved's fingers. We would make the links of our chains firmer, instead of loosening them; and the heavier they grow, the more we liken them to a garland of flowers.

I lived through all that; the little became the great, to me; the great, little. I saw, in the most indifferent trifles, causes for joy or chagrin. All the sweet, inno-

cent, tranquil happiness which I had known with this young girl was gone. McKenzie continued to visit us. I should say visit *her*. I suffered tortures from his attentions to her, but I was too proud to complain; and I even feigned not to notice the increasing intimacy between them.

I grew taciturn, moody. Abby questioned me, affectionately. I said that I was tired, and I was; for I worked like a galley slave, whipped to my task by this fever of the mind which was consuming me.

One evening, after having met by chance Abby and McKenzie in town, I was so unhappy that I could not eat a mouthful of the dainty supper which she had prepared. I pushed my plate aside, and rose from the table. I was suffocating. She rose also, accompanying me to the door, towards which I was going.

“You are sick, George,” she cried.

“No, no, not at all. Don’t trouble yourself in the least about me.”

“But, where are you going?”

“Just out for a little walk.”

“I’m going with you.”

“No,” I said, turning round to look her full in the face. “I prefer to be alone.”

She put her hand on my arm, and her face twitched nervously.

“George, you never looked at me like that before, and you shall not leave me in this mood. You are angry with me. Hush”—she put her hand on my mouth; and I moved away from her, but stood still to listen to what she was saying.

“You must not say a word till you have listened to me, George, dearest.” Her soft low voice full of feeling made the blood leap in my veins. “It is true, my love. I *did* make an appointment with him to meet him in town, but it was all for your sake. If you knew how many months I have been thinking how I could give you some pleasant little surprise, give you

something that you would care for. You are always getting something for me. But I had to have some help, and McKenzie has really been very kind in the matter. And don't ask me anything more about it, just now, for I can't give you the surprise, to-day. But to-morrow, —and it won't be but half a surprise, now I've spoken of it, will it? But I can't bear you to keep on thinking wrong of me." She blushed, she hesitated; and then, in a voice broken with emotion, she continued rapidly: "Do have some pity for me, George, and love me in the sweet tender way you used to love me. You are all my life. I have no thought that isn't yours. I am incapable of thinking of anyone else. I know that you love me, too; and that you have courage for both of us. I am wax in your hands, but you will not break me; you will mold me into something better than I am; and, dearest, don't misunderstand me. I should be incapable of loving you so fully, so fearlessly, if I did not feel in you a moral force stronger than mine. I *trust* you, sweetheart. I have suffered very much, yes, *very*, *very* much; but not so much now that I know that you love me, too. Yes. I know it, and I see that I have pained you. But have no fear. Never shall another possess my heart. I have consecrated my life to you, and we shall live together as the angels live in heaven, without fear one of the other, and in perfect confidence and love."

Her face beamed, her eyes hung on me with a look of ecstasy. I believe that she was sincere, even now; and at that time I would have been a knave to doubt her. My heart expanded in the warmth of her affection, as a flower in the sunshine of spring. I cannot speak of the happiness of that hour, succeeding hours of doubt and jealousy. There was something deeply pathetic in the abnegation of this love profoundly rooted in nature, yet aspiring to be purely spiritual. And just as words fail me, now, to express the joy of that hour, so they failed me then. I felt my heart swell like a

mother's over a beloved child, restored to her from the mouth of the tomb. Tears filled my eyes. I pressed her two hands in mine; and it seemed to me that youth revived in me, in all its purity and enthusiastic ardor, making the most difficult task light and easy.

When I look back and compare myself at that time with men of the same age to-day, I seem to myself singularly, perhaps ridiculously, ingenuous and young in feeling. But all the quiet events of my solitary and monotonous life for many years, had contributed towards keeping me in that state of mind, which we call youthful, or, if you like, poetical. My heart had not been exhausted with venal loves; it was still sensitive, and capable of tenderness and profound feeling. A strong love of nature tends also to keep open the springs of feeling, and I had loved this mute nature about me, without reflection and without restraint, as we love all that is beautiful.

Therefore, there is not one mature man in a hundred who will understand me when I say that I could still believe possible a life of innocent happiness for us, into whose solitude passionate love had entered.

I know that there is at present a pseudo-scientific way of speaking of man as wholly a product of his environment, chained to ancestral laws which determine his every action and every thought. This is the modern transformation of the theologian's gloomy dogma of predestination. But that fine unconscious sub-stratum of common sense which saves men from the folly of their conclusions, by directing them in a systematic course of action, diametrically opposed to their beliefs, keeps them moving onward in accordance with the truth, misunderstood and denied, though it may be, that man is *not* a mere mechanism without any other will than instinct, but is at liberty to follow the highest aspirations of his soul. Otherwise, there is no hope for the race, and we are hopelessly sunk in ancestral slime.

Man is an animal. Yes; but an animal that reasons,

that is capable of sacrificing his instincts in obedience to an ethical law, which he recognizes as beautiful and noble. All progress depends on that fact.

We are no longer living in a state of nature, but in a state conformable to the best development of the intellect, a social state in which each man is in honor and duty bound to contribute what is best in him to maintain order and happiness among the greatest number; and he cannot contribute his best without stifling the worst in him; he cannot make a law of unrestraint for himself, and deny the privileges of it to others, on the score that he is their superior. Who has declared that he is better than they? Himself? The witness is prejudiced.

I can see this all very clearly to-day, and I have earned the right to say it.

“Let him not boast who puts his armor on
As he who puts it off, the battle done.”

But I saw only one thing clearly then, and that was that I had no right to use any power which I might have over the woman whom I loved, to bring upon her the horrors of an infraction of the civil law, which would have for her the aspect of a crime. The appeal to what was best in me from what was best in her, broke the cruel spell under which I was suffering, and I would have suffered any torture before offending her without provocation, again. Then, too, the sweet consciousness that she really did love me, and that I was in no danger of losing her through the intrigues of a man whom I knew to be wholly unworthy of her, restored me to myself. I offered her no caress, I would not touch the soft trembling mouth held up to mine, but contented myself with looking at her through a mist of tears, and saying:

“You make me perfectly happy, my love—light of my life. We are *not* angels, or rather *I* am not one;

but I am not a devil, either. I respect you, as I respect the memory of my mother; and I will promise you that you will never again hear from me a word that she could not hear, and smile as she heard it. No, no, little one, *don't* cry. I am just as much ashamed as you are of my folly. I confess, frankly, that I was jealous, miserable as a lover, and I had no right to feel like that. I ought to be glad at whatever makes you happy. And I will try with all my heart to be so. I want no consecration of your life from any sense of duty. There is no question, whatever, of duty between us, so far as the disposal of our lives is concerned. I feel that I could lead you to the arms of another, to-morrow, if your happiness would result from it. But, Abby, this man could not make you happy. His impure life, his cynical views, so incapable of finding an echo in your candid and inexperienced soul, would make you wretched. His heart is worn out. He is incapable of anything but a transitory and superficial affection, and you are not the woman to content yourself with being the plaything of a month. If you are to be a wife and mother, I wish you to find a heart warm and sensitive as your own, and blood as young and vigorous to mingle with yours, in your children."

"But, why are you always thinking of him, George? As for me, I think of no one but you. Sometimes, I really wish I could. It would be better for me; but I am not afraid any more, dear, that I am in the way, for I know you love me, too."

CHAPTER VI

THE SURPRISE

THE next day, after finishing our dinner, Abby rose quickly, and removing the dishes with more than ordinary rapidity, she said:

“ You didn’t guess what that package was, which Mr. McKenzie brought a little while ago, did you? You’re a good boy; you haven’t asked me one question about it, and you were decent to McKenzie, too, which you haven’t been for a long time. Now, you are going to have your surprise, and I want you to tell me that you like what I have bought for you.”

She brought from her room a large portfolio, which she laid on the table before me, continuing to chat away as she untied the ribbons that held it together.

“ You know that I would not dare to buy you any books. What a presumption that would be! You have your decided tastes; and, besides, you have all the great men, and I shouldn’t like to humiliate either you or myself by putting one of the little fellows among them. But, you have hardly any pictures—just that head of Erasmus, which you persist in thinking so fine, in spite of his long nose; and that terrible, low-browed Savonarola, uglier still. One day you told me that you had seen the great galleries of Europe, too young to enjoy them, and that you would like to have some reproductions of the great masters; that art is also a language, and that one loves to see the ideas of great genius expressed on canvas. That is what I spoke to Mr. McKenzie about. I am so stupid, I hadn’t the slightest idea how I should get them, and he managed all that for me. I wanted them for your birthday, but he had to send abroad for them, and they have only

just come. I think it would be wicked to wait till your next birthday, or until Christmas, when you might be enjoying them all that time, don't you?"

She had opened the portfolio and was turning over the beautiful prints to give me a general view of the contents of the portfolio, but stopped in admiration before a beautiful copy of Allori's "Judith."

I had been so nervous for several weeks that I was in that state of morbid susceptibility when a trifle can wound or charm us; and the unexpected sight of this beautiful head recalled the tragic morning in Florence with such vividness, that for a moment I thought I should swoon with the shock of it.

"George, George dear, what is the matter with you? You are as white as a sheet. O my God! you have known a woman like that!"

"Yes—but I can't talk of it. You have been good to give me these beautiful pictures. I thank you very much for the pleasure they will give me, but I will look at them later."

I shut the portfolio, rose from the table, and left the house. I returned in the course of an hour or two, tranquil, and resolved to be cheerful. Abby's eyes were red and swollen with tears. I asked no questions, and took no notice of her emotion. I was too much ashamed of myself to be able to make either an excuse or an apology for my strange behavior at noon. I felt that I had acted like a child; but that the best way to make amends was to ignore the incident, and act as if nothing had happened, so I said:

"Now, Abby, let's have the pictures again. I want to look at them, carefully."

She brought them to me in silence, but before opening the portfolio, she said with a cold and indifferent tone, so marked that it betrayed affectation:

"Do you really wish to see them, or do you think it will please me to take notice of them?"

I looked up in astonishment. She had never spoken

to me like that, but I understood her waywardness, as she had understood mine. Mysterious bondage, sweet and bitter, cruel and kind, hideous and beautiful, by what delirium do we call it the noblest sentiment in life? Pitiable state, when a smile or a frown can make heaven or hell for us, when the great aims of life are lost in pitiable egotisms, or tremors of ecstasy or pain in the thought of another!

“Abby,” I said, reproachfully, “do I need to tell you that I appreciate your kindness, and am always deeply touched when you think of me?”

“Do I think of anything else?” Her voice trembled, her cheeks flushed. I put my hand on hers, as it rested on the table. We were silent. We were happy again, but I only pretended to look at the pictures. However, I noticed the absence of the beautiful head which I never saw again; I think that she destroyed it.

About this time I received an invitation to address a convention of agriculturists in the State of New York, and I seized on the opportunity for distraction which it promised me with a feeling that was almost gratitude. I set about the preparation of the address at once; and in order to share the wholesome distraction with Abby, I furnished her with a number of old journals, from which she was to gather materials for certain reports which I wished to make. It did us both good to have a common intellectual interest outside of ourselves. We talked, as Abby said, like two old farmers, and returned, in a great measure, to our former tranquil companionship.

But to him who has acquired a taste for wine, water is insipid; so is friendship after love. The heart rebels at this calmness after the delicious tumult that it has felt. Even the quarrels, the mutual recriminations, now that they are past, seem infinitely better than this deadly stagnation, this creeping paralysis of the heart. I noticed in Abby a certain resigned melancholy at times, but I dared not question her about it, or show any so-

licitude, and I must have appeared cold to her after the joyous gaiety and expansion of our first year together. But if she could have looked into my heart, what a volcano she would have seen burning there, under the cold outer crust. How little we know each other! even we who live side by side and touch hands, every day! I have passed through the world almost wholly unknown, and have often been called cold, where I have felt the deepest. It is so easy to be showily effusive, with a little surface emotion. I hardly know a falser saying than this, that out of the fullness of the heart, the mouth speaketh. It doesn't. The fuller the heart, the greater the silence, or if there be speech, the more halting it is.

CHAPTER VII

THE RELAPSE

ONE beautiful October evening, that one preceding the day of my departure for New York, we were sitting together on the threshold of the south door, looking out on the bay. The leaves were commencing to take on their vivid autumn coloring. The sun was setting in a delicate haze, giving to the landscape that soft blurred effect, at times much more beautiful than vivid distinctiveness. Around us, the most perfect silence. Abby had broken it to say how much she would miss me, and how I must hurry back as soon as I could. I had said that that was my pleasure, too; and then we were silent again.

Suddenly, she said in a quiet way that betrayed no emotion:

“Do you believe that if one has truly loved once, one ever forgets?”

“Do you mean ceases to love?”

“Yes.”

“When hope dies, one ceases to love, I think.”

“I do not believe it.”

“And I *know* it is so.”

“No.” She raised her head, and looked at me fixedly. “Excuse me. We *think* we know things with our brains, but the blood and the flesh, stronger than they are, speak quite differently. I believe that there is somewhere, though perhaps we may not meet, the being who for us is supreme; who belongs to us by the rights of a profound passion, but from whom destiny, or some accidental circumstance, fatally separates us. I believe that we may sometimes be mistaken, and think that the love which we feel is the supreme love.

Then arise painful complications, sometimes tragedies, when we are undeceived; but once the supreme love comes, once master of us, I believe that it is invincible. You have never spoken to me of your youth, but I believe that you have once loved like that, and that you have never forgotten."

I burst out laughing, but it was a nervous laugh, and I felt the blood mount to my forehead.

"What an idea!" I exclaimed.

"Yes, what an idea! But it is an idea that I can't get rid of, lately. Be frank with me. Talk to me of her, I shall listen with great sympathy."

It flashed over me at once that it was the Judith head of which she was jealous. Perhaps if I could have told her the whole story of that beautiful head, it might all have turned out differently for us. But I could not do it. It was *his* story, not mine, and it seemed to profane his memory to tell it; so I said:

"There's nothing to tell you, little one. The happiness of my life, as I have so often told you, began with you."

She put her hand on my arm, and an expression of deep pain lay on her face.

"You are not speaking the truth, George, but it is not necessary to say anything more. You love her still, or you *could* speak of her. The most serious and deepest feelings of our heart, we jealously guard at the bottom of it, and sometimes we do not even confess them to ourselves. But what's the use of talking any longer."

She sighed deeply, and rose, saying with affected gaiety: "Come with me; let's throw stones from the edge of the cliff into the bay. It's good exercise, it's better than sitting moping here."

She often had these sudden caprices. I dare say all women have; but one fault, perhaps the most dangerous of all for happiness, she was wholly free from, and that is sulking. Her clouds were all summer ones, and

passed in an hour. Usually, I had flexibility enough to yield to all her moods; but this evening, I was sad at heart. Something savage and rebellious in me was asking that dangerous question: What's the use? What is to be the end of this misunderstanding between two creatures made to be each other's joy?

As she rose, I laid my hand on her shoulder, and forced her to sit down again.

"No!" I exclaimed, almost rudely. "Let us not quit a serious conversation for such childishness. We have much to say to each other. Let's try to say it, this evening. To-morrow, we shall be far apart, and we neither of us know how long it may be before we shall have the chance to talk frankly, again. You have repeatedly accused me of being unhappy with you. I have repeatedly assured you of the contrary. But I do not need to accuse you. The love you feel for me is mingled with bitterness, suspicions, anxieties. It is never at rest."

"And do you think," she interrupted me quickly, "that there is a deep love which is at the same time tranquil? If there is, then I don't know it. My love is a *sea*; it is not a stagnant, scum-covered mill-pond."

"And flood and ebb-tide in it," I said with a bitter laugh.

"Yes, flood and ebb-tide in it," she repeated. "The love which I feel for you—oh, I mean to say it all out, clearly once, just once—my love is something which possesses me wholly, which will finish, I think, by killing me. A happiness? Yes, an ecstasy; and a wretchedness? Yes—at times, a martyrdom;—but it has its crown, and I would not escape it if I could. I belong *wholly* to you, and I would like to possess you in the same way. I do not wish to share you with anything. I am capable of being jealous of your work, your past, your books—in short, of anything that separates me from you."

"But not of McKenzie," I said sarcastically.

A smile passed over her face.

"I thank you for that word," she said. "Don't you see why? I have felt a keen joy in your jealousy of him. It meant that you felt as I did. But wait, don't judge me too harshly, yet. I only felt so at first. I only needed the proof: when I saw that you, too, could suffer for me, I did not wish you to suffer. I was eager, then, to show you that I didn't care the least in the world for him, and I don't. He is amusing. I like to talk with him, sometimes. I think that he is really clever; and he is always a perfect gentleman to me, but he is no more *you*, than that bay, yonder, is the ocean. And just because I don't know what love is, without this restlessness, and doubt, and longing, and entire possession of me, giving me no rest—the tranquillity and uniform kindness of your love seems to make of it something so pale, and faded, compared with mine: and then I think that you must once have loved like me, so madly that you would be willing to buy an hour of paradise for an eternity of repentance. Do I shock you horribly?"

"You do not shock me at all; but when you speak so contemptuously of the tameness of my love, you seem not at all to remember that it was I who first forgot this tie of blood which unites us and separates us, and that it was you who called me back to reason, and begged me to save you, and not to ruin you. And, Abby, I have never thanked you for that appeal to the man in me. I could not do it at the time, I could only bow my head in resignation to your decision. But I have thanked you, silently, many a time since then. You saved us both. I was ready, then, to say: All or nothing, no matter the price. I've thought a great deal since then, and I know that the eternity of repentance outweighs the hour of paradise, a million times. You have spoken of my past. I did love unhappily one who was far, far above me, and to the pain of this love without hope, I had the terrible misfortune to offend

her, and to become in her eyes a contemptible creature. Oh, how wretched I was! I feel still pained and humiliated, when I think of it; but I have long ago ceased to love her. She has become a sort of dream of my youth, almost without reality. I do not feel myself the same man who adored her. Life, work, study, have almost effaced her image in my mind. But it is a singular fact that the friendship which I felt for her brother is still alive. A great-souled fellow he was; a mind, broad, alert, giving of its superfluity to all who surrounded him—I shall miss him till the end of my life. Therefore, I know that though love can give the most exquisite joys and the keenest pain, it doesn't last in its freshness as friendship does. It is a fever that passes, a rosy mist through which we do not see distinctly, and in just proportions, but which dissipates at last, and leaves everything bare and common. I know that seems horrible to you; and it seems horrible to me, too; and I should never have believed it, at your age."

"And I shall never, never believe it, at yours, George. I love you, and I shall love you, all my life."

The tears blurred my eyes. For a while, I could not speak for the emotion that stifled me. She was silent, too, looking straight before her, her chin resting in her hand. When I was sufficiently master of myself to speak, I said:

"How I thank you for this frank, generous affection. I don't deserve it, but I will try to; and if the day comes when you have forgotten what you have just said to me, be frank, and if you wish to leave me to seek happiness elsewhere, do not hesitate a moment to tell me."

She covered her face with her hands and began to weep.

"You are very cruel," she sobbed, "to think that such a day could ever arrive. If you loved me the least bit in the world, you would know that in our lives there is no to-morrow. All the future is only a

great to-day. We have nothing to do with anything but the present. Don't speak to me any more of this frightful to-morrow. Isn't to-day sufficient?"

"Why do you cry, then?" I asked gently.

"Because you enrage me so with your cold reason; and because the little reason that I have that is not effaced by my heart, tells me you are right, as you always are. I am such a coward, such a coward!"

"No, you are not. What you call cowardice is perfect health. I understand you thoroughly. It is not long since I felt, as you do, the frightful cruelty of our situation. I felt like taking the world by the throat, and saying: 'I do not need you. I can live alone, alone with the sky, the earth, and her I love. You do not exist for me.' I think I could still have enough courage, or rather enough contempt for the world, to do it without regret; but you,—and don't believe that I think you weaker for it, but rather more loving, more sensitive, more moral,—you could never bear the reproaches of the world added to the reproach of your conscience. The memory of your mother——"

"No, no," she interrupted feebly, "I could not bear that. I should die of it, but, perhaps, content—who knows?"

"No, one does not die of reproach, and die content. If one were content, one wouldn't die."

"You always have your answer ready. O how *tired* I am! How tired! *how tired!* If I could only be so cool and indifferent as you!"

I blushed and bit my lips to keep back the emotion which stifled me. She was watching me closely, and when I betrayed myself, she clapped her hands, and rising, stood before me, smiling down at me with a flushed, excited face.

"How superb you are, like that!" she cried. "You have said more to me by that frown and gesture than by all your fine words."

"And how horribly cruel you are," I answered, leap-

ing to my feet with a sudden ferocity, and, seizing her by the wrists, I said in a hoarse voice:

“Will you live with me as my wife, or as my sister? You have your destiny in your own hands, again. Do not blame me, if you do not choose right. Speak. In a few years we shall be dust and ashes. There is a flower growing in our path. It may be poisonous, but it looks sweet and beautiful; shall we gather it? Speak!”

She turned white as snow.

“Quick,” I said, and shook her arm. “Which shall it be, wife or sister?”

“Oh, forgive me, forgive me, George! Your sister, your sister always.”

I freed her instantly. An intense disgust filled me. What did she mean? Why did she torture me, play with me like a cat with a mouse; hold out a cup to my burning lips, to dash it to the earth when I stooped to drink?

“Oh, don’t look at me like that, George. Kill me rather. I know that I am a coward, a wretch. But don’t condemn me so harshly. I needed only to know that you love me, yet.”

“Silence!” I said harshly. “That word must never again be pronounced between us. Brother and sister? Are there scenes like *this*, between them?”

“Say you forgive me.”

She was trembling so violently, and there was in her eyes a look of such intense pain, that I must have had a heart of stone not to be touched by it.

“Yes, I forgive you,” I said slowly. “You do not know what you do when you play with fire. But we must finish by putting a little more distance between us, if we do not wish to be burned.” An idea suddenly occurred to me, and in consequence of it, I continued: “Abby, I shall not come back from New York as quickly as I meant to. I shall stay away a few weeks. We have reached a crisis in our lives that asks resolution and a firmness of will that we no longer possess,

in the presence of each other. If we are not strong enough to wrestle with an enemy, we must avoid him. Life *is* beautiful. We must not spoil it in this way. We must find our way back to the joy that we have known. I won't leave you all alone, here. Invite Miss Dudley to stay with you. She is a fine sensible girl, and you like her."

"No," she answered excitedly. "You must not let me chase you away from home like this. It is I who will leave. I shall go back to Scotland. I ought never to have come here. Oh, how cruelly I have been punished for my folly!"

With that she burst into tears, and I had all the difficulty in the world to calm her, and make her consent to remain and invite her friend to stay with her.

I made my preparations for departure immediately, and the next morning I left home for the first time in many years. I had now the leisure and opportunity to reflect upon the problem that life had offered me for solution. I did not try to excuse myself, and I saw with inexpressible horror that I could not count on myself to act upon what I knew deep within me was right. I longed with all my heart to become master of myself, again. No youthful glamour of poetry could any longer disguise from me how much of caprice and vanity and self-love and brutal appetite are mingled in the sentiment called love. And yet with all that knowledge, if I had been sure that I could have made Abby happy by defying the civil law, I believe that I would have done it. But I knew her better than she knew herself. The first novelty passed, the deep moral substratum of her character would reassert itself. Overwhelmed with remorse, our union would seem a crime to her, our life would become a hell. But she had not yet arrived at that point of despair, when it is necessary to flee or to perish. Young, inexperienced, loving with all the ardor of a first passion, unconscious of the feroc-

ity of the brute within us, seeing no real danger in our life, revolting against the idea of my growing indifferent to her, wishing with all her heart to enchain me permanently, but shocked, revolted, at the idea of a bond unsanctioned by law, she was certainly more unhappy than I, and I had left her with a tenderness mingled with compassion, like the tenderness of a mother.

Flying through the forests on the train, my eyes apparently fixed on the landscape, I saw nothing but her face distorted with pain, her eyes swimming in tears. It was her sobs that I heard, and not the whistling, the shrieks, the incessant noises of the train; and perhaps I had never loved her so perfectly as in these hours when I was trying to reason myself into loving no more. It is a frightful hour, that hour in human life when we say good-by forever to love. It seems as if the desolation of death had sunk into the soul, and that henceforth we are dragging a corpse and not an animated body through life. And all literature, all the teachings listened to from childhood, tend to confirm us in this feeling. There are no winged words for the austere courage of solitude; love is the only theme to which the poet fits his music.

I tried to think of other things, but my mind seemed incapable of freeing itself from her, and at the end of a few minutes came back inevitably to her. I tried to talk with an old man, whose sensible ideas might have interested me, at any other time; but to-day he bored me excessively. Everything that he said seemed to me cold, insipid, and unimportant, compared with this burning question which consumed me. To wish and not to wish, to be the slave of an emotion, to feel one's self tossed from desire to desire, like a cork on the waves, what a miserable fate! But he who can reflect may be saved. I recognized my folly.

CHAPTER VIII

DARKNESS

ARRIVED at my destination in New York State, I was met by a delegation who took me to the best private boarding-house in town, the hotels being full. It was kept by a bustling portly woman with a little inoffensive-looking husband, with a timid apologetic air that seemed to ask pardon for being in the way. The position of woman in America very often reverses the marital relations, and it is the husband, who, in private boarding-houses, usually receives his daily bread from the hands of his vigorous spouse. Feminine pride in adornment, the satisfaction of vanity by living in a large house in town, the domination of social life by the young, in which the young girl lives only to make a brilliant show, the publicity of family life in the innumerable boarding-houses of our large cities, tend in a great measure to destroy in a vast number of men the primitive sentiment of independence. Every boarding-house is first of all the sacrifice of a home. It shows a good face to the street, but it is desolate within, huddling a motley crowd, bound by no tie but the common need of food and shelter. But I needed just the feeble splash of this atmosphere of gossip, with its undertone of spite and envy, to feel the tranquil beauty of family life, where ties are not material, but hearts are bound together in loving affection. And when I recalled my life with Abby, it was not the pitiable misunderstandings and tumults of feverish love which I dwelt on, but the sweetness of innocent gaiety, the charming simplicity of our life, far from all the tedious distractions that invade the home from social

requirements—our entire sufficiency one to the other. What madness had seized us and introduced into our paradise the serpent of despair?

I wrote to her that I would return another man, cured forever of my folly, recognizing in her tender friendship the great wealth that I possessed. I did not need to learn the same lesson three times over. I had quite got it by heart now; and she should live with me free as the birds of the air, free to take flight whenever it seemed good to her, or to stay with me, the solace and the joy of my life.

I received from her a letter full of despair and bitterness. She accused herself of having made life insupportable to me, of having driven me from home. She called herself ungrateful, foolish, criminal. She begged me to stay away from her until she herself could resolve what was the best thing for her to do: but at any rate she begged me to forgive her for any evil she had done, or might do yet in the moral darkness that shrouded her at present.

I was alarmed at the tone of despair in the letter, and was about to make preparations for an immediate return, feeling that she needed me, when another letter, following upon the heels of this one, was as cheerful, as calm, as the other had been lugubrious. She accused herself, in this letter, of a vulgar exaggeration in the other, assuring me that she had no sooner mailed it than she would have given anything in the world to have been able to recall it; but that she would try now, as much as possible, to efface the effects of it. Didn't I know that these black moods were not at all natural to her? Romantic? Oh, yes, she might be that, but romantic on the rosy side. She loved life as much as I did. She would gather its roses, and quietly pluck off its thorns. She had been stupid, *stupid! stupid!* but she was beginning to see dawn on the horizon, soon it would be full day; and she would be so wise—wise as a china doll.

Who can ever be sure that he knows well all the secret folds of the human heart? This letter which expressed the most careless gaiety pained me a great deal more than the first one, in which a real sorrow was depicted. It was not a cold indifference, a worldly cynicism that I wished, or expected from her. But what did I want? I could not have clearly told if I had tried. But, piqued or wounded, I hardly know which, I replied briefly, assuring her that her letter had pleased me very much; that we were both now on the road to wisdom, and that nothing remained to do but to continue in it, and that I should stay in New York a month longer. It was three weeks before I received a reply to this letter, but, in the meantime, I continued to write her cheerful letters, in which I never failed to say that I should be glad to be back home with her.

It was the truth. I was frightfully bored among all these women, who, for some reason or other, took particular pains to try to entertain me. Now, I have the greatest respect for a woman who is natural and good; and, like all men, I am weak enough to be susceptible to the flatteries of coquettish beauty. I can also find in the conversation of a bright woman, no matter what her age is, a lively and delicate pleasure. Indeed, I hardly know anything so sweet and charming as an aged woman whose heart is still as warm as her brain is quick, and in whom that maternal instinct which makes the dominant trait of every good woman is not restricted to the limited circle of her family, but expands into a sweet tenderness that envelops all who enter her atmosphere. I have been rich enough in my life to know two or three such women, not more. I especially remember one such, who was nearly eighty, when I knew her; but she was a woman over whose heart and mind time had no power who was younger in the fullness of her years than half the young people I have ever known, whose room was the heart of the house which she made a home. She brimmed it with sunshine, the

cloudiest day. I used to go to her, when I was fretted or disappointed, and her talk was a tonic to me. I always came away feeling stronger and fuller of cheer. The influence of a woman like that is inestimable. But it comes from ripeness and sweetness of character, from difficulties met, and struggled with, from patience, long suffering, thoughtful study, not from selfish seeking of pleasure, and selfish shirking from duty.

But I have known far more women of another type, the type of the woman who cannot reconcile herself to the years which gather about her, whose body withers and ages, while the mind remains green and immature: women who try in vain to force youth to return to them by the aid of cosmetics and dyes.

We are in the habit of saying, to-day, that there are no more old women. It always grieves me to hear it, for it means that the wide experience, the large and tender tolerance of the frank and loving woman exist no more; and that her place is filled by living manikins whose steel heart and wired brain are galvanized by vanity into the hideous semblance of life.

And in truth, there is no mark of wisdom and serenity in the vast majority of women nowadays, nor in this century that more than any other bears the mark of their influence. Listen to their talk. Not content with commas and periods and plain type, they want every word underscored, and every mark an' exclamation point. As if the rose-bush would be so beautiful, were every leaf a flower; as if the dark green didn't relieve and bring out the vivid coloring of the rose! And so I like a background of quiet strength and serenity in a woman. I like to find in her a refuge for my serious hours, a well of quiet waters, cool, refreshing, when I am hot and thirsty. I like to find in her real depth of feeling, and not mere sentimental soapsuds blown into an eye-catching bubble that is ninety-nine parts air.

There was at this time a vulgar superstition in vogue among the half-educated, among whom, by the way,

the vulgar superstitions of our age find their largest following; and it called itself spiritualism, though its chief business was materializing. One heard, also, a great deal about theosophy and various other osophies and isms, all tending to, and growing out of, exaggerated forms of individual egotism. Here again, women were the readiest and most numerous converts, some of them imagining themselves all spirit, all thought, some of them laying claim to recollections of a former existence on this earth, when they were great actresses, or fascinating beauties of international reputation.

I contrasted these superstitious follies, with Abby's piety, and it smelt clean and sweet to me, in comparison. At least, it was free from the foul inflation of egotism. I longed to see her again; and at last, feeling myself strong enough to carry out my resolutions, I started back home, a smile upon my lips. I made a score of plans to live more wisely, more broadly. I saw that in many ways, I had been very selfish, and that my life with Abby was tending to make us both more selfish still. We had no right to shut ourselves up in our joy like two mites in a cheese. I resolved in my mind several ways of benefiting the community near us, and thought what pleasure it would give her to be associated with me in these plans.

I had written to her telling her the exact day on which I should arrive, so that she might have the joy of anticipating my return. I fancied her counting the hours, thinking of nothing else. She would have the house in perfect order. The train would not arrive until late, and I wrote her not to think of coming to meet me, but something told me that she would disobey me, and, down in my heart, I should be glad of that disobedience, and would scold her very sweetly for it. That is why I searched eagerly all the faces of the women at the station. But the night was cold; a thick mist covered the earth, and I knew very well why she had stayed at home. She wished to keep up the fire, so that I should find

the comfort which I should need, after a long walk in the cold mist. But I was too impatient to get home at once, so I hired a carriage. My heart beat with an ardor that would seem to be a protest against the idea that my love was transformed into friendship; but it really was an ardor quite pure, whose transport was half the joy of giving joy, of showing that I had come back not less loving, but no longer the slave of an emotion. The sentiment of honor had triumphed over my weakness. I rejoiced unselfishly in the thought of this young life attached to mine. I fancied her rosy with pleasure, her heart beating faster, too, as the time for my arrival approached. I saw the little table set for two, a huge pine log crackling in the fire-place, and adding its red light to that of the evening lamp. Oh, how good it is, this home coming, after the cold indifference of the world!

I dismissed the cabman at the foot of the winding pathway that led to the house, glad to put a little solitude and silence before my great joy. It was like a mute prayer of thankfulness. I plunged into the shade of the tall forest trees that quite concealed the house. A few minutes more, and I should have the first glimpse of it, in the beam of light that would send its welcome to me through the darkness. O sublime folly of the human heart! My eyes moistened at thought of that bright beam which was to salute me like a word from her. Oh, a thousand blessings on her forever! My joy, my pride! Here I am at the turn of the pathway, my eyes hungry and thirsty for that light. It was not there. What a child I was to feel this sudden sinking of the heart—this keen disappointment. On!—on!—I was too far away yet, the mist concealed it, of course. I started to run, my eyes straining the darkness as if my life depended on this ruddy beam. Nothing yet. She had drawn down the curtains, of course. She wished to shut in all this ruddy warmth that I might say, “How beautiful and cheerful it is here! What a contrast to the cold

and gloom outside." In a moment I was at the door. I put my hand on the knob and tried to turn it, but it would not yield. Oh, she was afraid! I knocked loudly. I waited. No answer came. The minutes seemed hours. Had she gone to visit one of her friends? Then, she had not received my letter. What a pity! I wanted to see her, then and there. A feeling of bitter disappointment, akin to despair, seized me. I rummaged in my pocket for a key, but my trembling and impatient hands could not find the keyhole. The damp fog enveloped me like a wet rag. I lighted a match. It burned a moment, and went out. I lighted another, found the keyhole and with a push flung open the door and entered the house. All was black and cold; and that musty, sickening odor of a house long shut up, assailed my nostrils. My heart felt like lead. Was she dead? "Abby! Abby!" I cried in terror, as if I could recall her from the tomb. "O Abby! Abby! My God, where are you?"

I struck another match, found the lamp and lighted it. I looked around me in amazement, almost ready to swoon in terror and despair. I rushed with the lamp into her room. It was stripped bare of all the pretty little decorations which she had put there. Not a dress on the hooks, her trunk and her valise gone. My blood was on fire. My temples beat like sledge-hammers. I was stifling. I trembled so violently that I feared to let fall the lamp, and approached the table to put it down. There, fastened to the tablecloth with a large pin, was a sheet of paper, closely written over. I seized it, and devoured it. So long as I live, I shall never forget these lines that were written on it:

"I have never loved you so dearly as at this moment, when I leave you forever. Do not look for me. Do not seek to know how much I suffer. Do not judge me. Do not blame me. I am going away with him. I could not go alone. I was too cowardly to die. There is still in the world one being to whom I am dear. I

shall try to be faithful to him except in thought. There —God help me! I am wholly yours. You believe in the remedy of time. I do not. But there *is* one, *perhaps*, and I risk all on this great perhaps; but only on one condition, and that is, that I shall never see you any more. Good-by! good-by! good-by, forever! O my only love! I have one consolation in this dreadful hour, and that is that I shall never again grieve you, never again drive you from home."

I cannot describe the delirium of pain into which this letter plunged me. The paper fell from my hands. The blood seemed to congeal about my heart. The blow had struck with all its force. I have great natural vigor. I never swooned in my life, but, for a moment, I thought that I was going to lose consciousness. I staggered like a drunken man. An immense gulf had yawned before me, swallowing up all my happiness.

I picked up the paper, and looked for the date. It bore that of the third day after my departure. A futile rage succeeded my despair. I tore the letter into a thousand fragments. If she had stood before me, at this moment, I could have killed her, in the flood of hatred and contempt that swept over me. She had wantonly deceived me. She had kept alive my confidence in her, in order to use it to betray me. I drew from my pocket the letters which she had written, though I had no need to do so, to know their contents. I ran rapidly through them, trying to read in them her purpose, in the light of this discovery; but saw no trace of it. I destroyed them, also. I would have liked to destroy and efface her memory in my heart, if that were possible. I could have borne the loss of her with patience, if she had been open and frank with me; but to steal away in this dastardly manner, to keep up the farce of our undisturbed relations in the very heart of her treachery, that was unpardonable. There came over me the bitterest humiliation of a proud man, that of

having been hoodwinked, of having taken base metal for gold. As I write now, I would not, for a great deal, think that I had never in my life been generous enough to commit a folly, never truthful and trustful enough to have been deceived. But in the first fierce sting and pain of this blow, I cursed my folly, and I said to myself: "If you shed one tear, George Graham, I shall kill you! I shall kill you!" and burying my head in my hands, I sat with hot, dry eyes, and thought it all over. Why should I weep for the loss of a glass bead that I had taken for a diamond? What a weak, sentimental puling ass I had been to fall in love with a pair of bright eyes and a soft voice, and stake my happiness on a smile. I, a man grown, a man whom years might have taught, were there anything teachable in him. Coward! slave! that I was. I had always weakly run away from pain, as if it hadn't wings where I had legs, and couldn't catch me and strangle me with its pitiless hands. Strangle me? No! It had never strangled me, yet, and it shouldn't now. There was something in me that it couldn't reach, some ever-green sprig of life that it could not blast. I was like a man to whom a delirium gives muscles of steel. All the man in me cried out: Up, up and onward! Work—toil—change night into day, if need be, but make something of your life. You have been frittering away your leisure in the most useless and absurd reveries. You have grown, before, under the baptism of grief. You will grow again. Never again will you trail your manhood through the narrow, dirty stream of sentimentality, you will bathe in the boundless ocean of truth. Its cold pure waters will give back vigor to your flaccid muscles. Look steadily into the abyss until your eyes are used to the darkness, and you will see emerge from it the forms of the great souls of all ages. Listen, and you will hear their sighs and groans transformed into melody.

There are hours when a line of poetry, a great thought

speaks to us for the first time. We have read it a thousand times without having seized its significance; but to-day the line is luminous; it has found a penetrating voice, and we tremble with sympathy as we listen. That night I read "King Lear."

I, too, had dared to stake my happiness on another, and I was to be punished for the folly, as if it had been a crime. But liberty, health, vigor were still mine, and the last word had not been said. But there was one rock I wished to avoid. I did not wish to be a cynic. I had a horror of pessimism—that hardening of the heart after bitter experiences. I wanted calm, but not stagnation; breadth, but not vagueness of view; liberty of the heart, but not cold indifference. I wished to profit by my pain, rather than to forget it. Of course, I did not feel these desires so strong at first. It was pride that particularly dominated me, the instinct of self-preservation, under a disagreeable form. But in the midst of all these efforts and aspirations, the image of the woman whom I had loved never left me, for a moment. A great love is stunned, not killed, at the first blow of treachery, and it dies hard; for it is rooted in all the fibers of our being, mingled with our blood and our brain. But what hell is comparable to that of being condemned to love that which we neither respect nor esteem? To this first hour of supreme misery, of contempt mingled with wounded love, succeeded long hours of tenderness, in which the wound pulsated painfully and all my being seemed to circle around her, and to cry out for an assurance that she was not severed wholly from me. To reason over a wound does not cure us of its pain. Time alone does that. Still, I struggled with all my power to overcome the weakness of my heart. But all this repressed tenderness within me made me tremulously sensitive to the least touch of beauty or emotion. I often felt the tears rise to my eyes at sight of a superb sunset, or at the sweet face of a child looking up trustfully into mine. But I knew that this extreme sensi-

bility was morbid—the effort of the soul to throw off its pain.

I had stretched out my arms towards the impossible, without seeing the snare at my feet. I had fallen into it, and, mangled and suffering, I moved about feverishly, waiting for the hand of the deliverer, and the dawn of a new day. It was a long time coming, this dawn. The shadows lasted two long years. I still remember the first day when she was not my first thought in waking, my last, when I sank to sleep.

CHAPTER IX

DAWN

IT was a bright day in early summer; a bird had alighted on the window sill, near my bed. I heard its cheerful twitterings and, waking, saw its bright eye fixed on me. I smiled. I put my hand out gently, and it flew away, but I rose with a reinforcement of vigor that I had not felt in a long time. The morning sun was sparkling in the dew; everything about me was so fresh and young in this sweet bright light, that I, too, seemed to share in its youthful vigor. I dressed myself in haste, prepared a light breakfast, and then, as I sat down to eat it, she came, suddenly, into my mind, but not with the vivid distinctness of old, but as if faded, obliterated; no longer a part of me. It was finished; time and work had conquered. I belonged to myself once more, reborn into tranquil strength.

I faced the future again with a light heart. I asked nothing more of it than health and an open mind. The dream of happiness in love had faded away, never to revive; for I am not of those whose heart easily inflamed renews, again and again, the same experience. I had loved twice, with all my heart, with all my mind, and with all my strength; I was exhausted for that experience; but still capable of warm and generous feeling. More than half of my life was gone, but I might still reasonably count on twenty years more. I had all the money that I wanted, that is to say, all that I needed. I passionately loved books, but I had no creative genius, only some little critical talent. It was not enough to make me a power in directing the taste of my contemporaries; but just enough to make me fastidious, and prevent me from joining the great army of the mediocre, who have invaded literature in our day.

It is only the Greeks who have ever realized the danger of confiding the same doctrines to everybody. Modern thought is suffering from the invention of printing and the institution of popular education. Formerly, it was only men of genius who devoted themselves to creating works of art and literature, and they created for the pleasure and instruction of a superior class of readers. But, to-day, is the reign of mediocrity. The man of genius is replaced by the man of talent, or the *glib* man, who no longer speaks to the highest intelligence, but to the average mind. But the average mind lives in the little things of daily life. It has not wings with which to soar above the heights for the sake of a superb outlook. It loves the easy, not the difficult. Its incitation to knowledge are curiosity or envy. It wishes emotions, not thoughts. It is the child's mind, never long content with one thing, avid always of what is new, eager for sensation. And here the childishness ceases, and curiosity becomes prurience, and for the sake of a sensation, the mind willingly lends itself as a sewer for all the filth of humanity to drip through.

Who cares now for the real value of things, for that which lies below the surface? Who prefers perfect courage, perfect sincerity, to weak compliance and flattering illusions? Not many: and yet, I think that I can class myself among the lovers of truth and courage. I knew, therefore, how to choose and to love what is fine in literature, and I would willingly have passed my life in the enjoyment of my leisure and my books, if my conscience had not told me that my sun had not yet sunk low enough on the horizon to warrant me in folding my arms and taking my ease.

The inner voice kept asking me: "Have you received all these gifts of leisure to use them on yourself? Have you been fertilized by pain to bear no fruits? Are you but an animal to graze peacefully among the tall grass in your corner of the meadow, then fatten and die?"

Free from personal sorrow, this spur pricked me more

and more keenly. Placed in circumstances very favorable for becoming very rich, I might have turned my attention to commerce, especially, become the prime mover of material prosperity to a growing community, represented it politically, and been called a man of influence. But this influence wasn't intimate enough to satisfy me. I had seen many of these public men, in my time, ruling their little world as from a pedestal, yet touching but superficially, and through purely material interests, all those with whom they came into contact, and passing, they left no trace of themselves. The poorest school-master, guided by a sense of right, does more in a day than such men in a year: for his mind has awakened the intelligence of another.

Of this period of doubt and hesitation, I especially remember one day in August when I was taking a walk along the edge of a deep ravine where a stream of water flowed over a rough, pebbly bed. I was thinking of my mother, and her memory returned to me purified, exalted in its heroic abnegation. She had, for all her philosophy, no other precept than resignation to a divine will: but she bore her daily crosses and daily burdens with more sweetness than anyone whom I had ever known. My heart hungered after her, just an hour of her presence, to lay my head in her lap, to feel her soft hand stroke my hair, and hear the quiet voice utter some word of love or consolation. I sat down at the foot of a large tree; the rustling of the leaves in the breeze filled my ears with a vague murmur. I fell into one of those delicious reveries, from which we come out strengthened, calmed, contented. I don't know how long I sat there, but when I rose I noticed at my feet some broken fragments of rock, bearing the fluted impress of a shell. It was a voice from the past whispering again to me, "Leave thy trace before thou diest."

Returning home, I surveyed my large tract of land, ten times larger than my needs. Did it belong to me

then? No. What should I do with it? Who was to come after me to claim it? An idea flashed through my mind. In the town near by were many youths growing up in indolence and poverty—their days passing without reflection, without duties. There was my task. These boys belonged to me, by my power to help them. Even if I could make of but one of them a dutiful citizen, would it not be worth while? I had no son to call me father; but the father-heart was big in me, and I could do vicarious duty here, and render a service to the country that had sheltered and fed me so long. But how should I set about it? The human soul is not a piece of clay that can be molded into the form we will. I was not a dupe to what is called the influence of environment, which, as generally interpreted, means that you can grow grapes of thorns. I knew that that couldn't be done. But how look through this thick layer of flesh, and know of a truth that the soul in it would repay the trouble taken in cultivating it? For with regard to this subject, also, of education, I was no longer a sentimental, and did not believe that it could supply defects of nature.

Every naturalist knows that Nature is prodigal, because she does not intend to fail in the single design on which she is bent: namely, that of reproducing herself in a thousand forms. The oak casts its acorns to the ground by thousands, so that one or two may have the good fortune to live. It is *life* that she loves, and she breathes the breath of it as willingly into a rat as into man; and when man in his pride calls himself her favorite, and even dares to try to separate himself from her, by ignoring her laws, she strikes him with sterility. She has no interest whatever in his intelligence: it is his body that she wants, and this is one of those crude facts that we cannot too often repeat to ourselves; for at present, as in the days of Rousseau, there is a very great deal of false sentiment with regard to nature. I had been living for twenty years alongside Indian

tribes, who were living according to nature: that is, according to the rats of the field. I saw them degenerate at the approach of civilization, not because civilization is degenerating, but because they could not assimilate it. The most natural food in a feeble stomach, that cannot do its work, may poison the system: and as I have said before, the United States, in giving itself the enormous and impossible task of civilizing the Indian, has adopted the most refined means of exterminating a rude and hardy race.

In a similar way, there are, in the midst of our most flourishing civilizations, great numbers of so-called degenerates who are at bottom nothing but barbarians and may sooner or later find themselves in our asylums and in our prisons. The true degenerate is a fallen creature, whose nerves are wrecked by abuse. The barbarian is a creature who has never risen. His nerves are of steel, he knows none of the refinements of feeling of which the degenerate is frequently capable, and which often awaken in the unthinking a misplaced sympathy. The degenerate may be a poet, may pass in the world for one of its rarest souls because he can weep over the breaking of a butterfly's wing. But beware of him. Don't make him your friend, if you are a man; don't love him, if you are a woman. He is capable of the most frightful cruelties, the most revolting vices. He can rend like a tiger and stab like an assassin. He has no sense of proportion. He will tell you that the imprisonment of a white mouse in a cage affects him with as deep a rage of hate and pity, as the enslavement of a nation. He is as unstable as water; he will fall on your bosom to-day, he will bite you to-morrow. He is to himself the center of the universe. The sun shines to warm him alone; and the moon rises to give him an opportunity to sniffler his sentimentalisms into the fond ears of a beautiful woman! Strange mixture of lust, greed, cruelty, vice, treachery, egotism, and sentimental tenderness! And women are his foreordained victims.

To them, he pours out his sorrows, his melancholy; the cold world does not understand him, and the woman alas! thinks that she does, and wastes her heart's treasure in this bottomless pit. The barbarian, the degenerate, are the pests of our civilization; but we have as yet found no way of eliminating them. There is only one example in history of a nation that tried to do it systematically, and that nation lives, now, only on the pages of Plutarch.

Of the two, the degenerate is the more dangerous by far, because he passes for what he isn't; and has the art of perfuming his filth with Cologne water.

Now, I had no intention of trying to educate either a barbarian or a degenerate. I meant to choose the best of the material at hand and do what I could with it. I had a hundred and fifty acres of woodland on the outskirts of the town and daily increasing in value with the growth of it. I resolved to divide it into twenty lots of five acres, each properly laid out so as to be accessible, and to give it to twenty young people from sixteen to eighteen years of age, on condition that they should clear it off and cultivate it. The timber cut, would more than amply pay them for the first year's labor of clearing the ground; after which, each might cultivate his own five acres, as it seemed best to him. After five years' work on it, they would earn a clear title to it and would receive it from me. But, if at any time, they relaxed their zeal, the land was to be abandoned, and I had the right to bestow it on somebody else. I required also a systematic and thorough study of agriculture, including botany, the nature of plants, and the constituents of the soil.

I did this from the belief that though *nature* has no interest in the man of intelligence, civilization is the product of intelligence and is maintained by it; and so far as it is possible, labor should always be united to intelligence to secure its best results.

CHAPTER X

AMONG THE SCHOOL-MASTERS

I BEGAN now, daily, to look for my boys. I demanded a healthy body, an open intelligence and a disposition to do right; in short, a good soil in which to sow my seed. And here, I wish to render a tardy justice to my father. I believe that his ideas were right in wishing my education to be practical, rather than ornamental. To introduce a new need where there is contentment, does not always mean the introduction of an element of growth. In a stupid mind, it may mean to pave the first step to folly or to crime.

I was confirmed in this idea by a systematic study of the educational system of the United States; and in long conversations with some of the best school-masters of the country, I have come to the following conclusions:

That the system is an *ideal* one, and that that is the root and branch of its weakness. The *ideal* is the impracticable, that which is never attained, but which serves as an aspiration, a direction in which we walk. What is needed, is a *real* educational system: one which recognizes limitations, one which recognizes distinctions, and is not based upon a false and vicious presumption of equality among minds. The total absence of any such recognition was the first thing that struck me in looking over the High School curriculum of the free public schools. It was a complete bill of fare of all possible forms of instruction—art, science, literature, languages, ancient and modern, music, elocution, mathematics, philosophy, even including that most speculative of all studies, psychology, which, at the very least, requires

half a lifetime of reflection and observation before one can be sure of a single principle in it,—in short, the whole vast domain of human knowledge and research was set before boys and girls ranging from twelve to nineteen years of age!

I looked at it in amazement.

“This is what you do for your picked minds; what provision do you make for the mediocre, who, like the poor, are always with us?” I asked the principal of a flourishing city High School. He did not quite understand me, so I continued:

“Do you mean to say that every pupil who enters your High School, and completes its four years’ course, is expected to be proficient in the greater number of these subjects?”

“Oh, yes, certainly. That is what his diploma means.”

“Then you have some rigid method of sifting minds, by which you give this varied and exceptional training to the few, who can really profit by it?”

“Oh, no. They come up from the ward schools, where they have spent from seven to eight years in preparatory work. Of course, a system of natural sifting goes on there. The very weak drop out, and we get the stronger ones. Our enrollment this year is 1750.”

“Seventeen hundred and fifty! Do you mean to say that you have found 1750 boys and girls, who can take the training of an intellectual athlete, a savant, and come out strong under it? What time have they for recreation? What time have they even for proper study?”

He smiled rather uncomfortably, and said:

“The recreation problem, to be frank with you, solves itself more easily than the other. The American boy or girl is not subjected to the same rigid home discipline as the European child. He is self-assertive from the cradle. It is the parent who does the submitting, not the child. He says, ‘Mother, I am going out to-night,’ if he is considerate enough to mention the fact at all;

instead of, 'Mother, *may* I go out to-night?' The result is that he goes out a great deal too much. He begins his social life, sometimes, before he gets into his knee-trousers. He has his parties, his picnics, his girl, even, if you please; the girl you see has as much freedom here as the boy, and the parks and theaters offer their temptations, so that, on the whole"—he hesitated, scratched his head, and raised his eyebrows, and I finished his sentence for him.

"You have a surplus of recreation."

"Yes, so, you see, it becomes a question of regulating it, rather than providing for it. And we do that," he added cheerfully. "We recognize that the young need pleasure, need youthful companionship, need sunshine just like the plants; and we give them plenty of it. We don't draw the reins tight on these restive young colts—perhaps not tight enough. We let them form literary societies, scientific, art, or debating clubs; we give them opportunities to show what they can do by dramatic entertainments before the public."

"What!" I interrupted, "you run a sort of private theater in connection with your schools? You complain of a surplus of recreation, and you deliberately add to your surplus, instead of trying to reduce it? or is it the homeopathic theory set to education, that like cures like?"

"No, no, you don't understand me at all. I said we *regulated* the amusements of the young. We try to substitute for the aimless, gossiping, social waste of time a legitimate intellectual form of amusement. Play is the normal pastime of the young. The acceptance of that fact by modern educators was a revolution in education. It set aside force, rigidity, harshness and substituted inclination for them. It banished the rod."

"And substituted barley-sugar. Yes, I understand you, now. You put a pill into the child's candy, and you never leave off feeding him candy."

"What do you mean?"

"Just what I said. You Americans have made a hobby horse of the kindergarten method, and it follows the child into his youth and into the High School, where it would seem time to put off the infant's swaddling clothes. You 'mother' the boy after he is weaned, and needs 'fathering,' so it seems to me. But the proof of the pudding is in the eating. I shan't condemn the system till I know the results. In my time, we thought play one thing, and work another. We said 'all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy'; but we never thought of mixing them. We thought change an element of zest, and went with more alacrity from work to play, and play to work. *'Mais nous avons changé tout cela.'* You have athletic clubs, too, I see; out-door games."

"Oh, certainly. It's in the air. You breathe it. You can't get rid of it. It's all very well to talk about ideal situations; but you have conditions to deal with, facts you can't get rid of. You must yield to them, or rather compromise."

"Ah, yes, I see, the United States school system, then, is like the parent: it does not guide the young; it submits to them. I have been told that when the negroes were first emancipated, they all wanted to learn Latin and Greek. To them, it was the mysterious sesame, the open door into all the luxuries of wealth and leisure. Your young country has looked at education in the same way, and not as a stern discipline, an emancipation of the mind by a long, thorough course of fixed, persistent, painful labor. Your boys and girls talk about going to college as they talk about going to the races. It's a rollicking good time they are after, first—and an education, incidentally. Now, it doesn't seem to me worth while to expend the immense sums of money which you spend on education, just to give multitudes of idle young people a good time. Not long ago, I saw some books advertised, and all the stress was laid on the elegant binding and the high quality of the paper. Nothing was said about the contents. The books were evidently

intended to make a brave show on some unused library shelves. I have been looking over catalogues of various private and public seminaries, and I noticed here that all the stress was laid on the electric lights, and modern improvements—the vast grounds, the facilities for boating and out-door games. Not a line about the efficiency of the teachers, the thoroughness of the instruction. Material comforts and pleasures were the drawing-cards. I look over this ambitious curriculum of yours, and it seems to me like an immense dinner-table, furnished with meats and fruits and dainties from all the climes and countries of the world. And everybody is invited to sit down to it; the dyspeptic, the weak, the diseased, the fastidious, have just as much room there as the strong. And they are asked to eat of everything. A Gargantua alone would be at home there. But where are the Gargantuas with an ideal digestive apparatus? What are the results of this culinary orgy? The dyspeptics and the sick are only made more dyspeptic and weaker from indigestion, and the strong rise gorged and dulled. What should you do? You should put before your guests the simple, wholesome food that they can digest. It is not the quantity eaten, but the quantity digested, that strengthens the body, and the same fact holds true with regard to intellectual food."

"That's all well enough, sir, but the American people know what they want, and they are willing to pay for it, too. They've a perfect right to do as they please."

"Oh, certainly, nobody contests that right, only let's not call a superficial smattering, a peck here and there at a bushel of educational plums—an *education*. I have seen graduating essays on the loftiest themes compiled from encyclopedias, and every unusual word and a great many ordinary ones, were misspelled in it. The writer hadn't even learned to use his eyes correctly, and see properly, what was set before him. I have seen pupils in higher mathematics boggle at the multiplication

table, and pupils who had ‘*finished*’ geography locate Egypt in India. It is this sort of ‘*finish*’ that I am objecting to. It isn’t courtesy to say all this; but I have a definite object in view. I wish to profit by your weakness as well as your strength. There *is* strength in your system. I don’t deny it. It is so palpable that it does not need dwelling upon. It is a glorious thing that not a young soul in your country need lose his social birth-right to a good education, if he wants it. It is a magnificent thing, that among all the common pebbles on which you have given yourselves the ungrateful and useless task of putting a high polish, there may be here and there an agate, or even a diamond that need not pass without luster, unrecognized through life. But it is the enormous *waste* that troubles my Scotch thrift. Josiah Wedgwood used to go through his pottery, and with that quick, vigilant, beauty-loving eye of his, he would single out every bit of bad work and smash it with his stick. It had no right to exist and pass itself off for perfect. Walter Scott, in his private journal, once wrote:

“ ‘To give education to dull mediocrity is a flinging of the children’s bread to dogs; it is sharpening a hatchet on a razor strop, which renders the strop useless, and does no good to the hatchet.’

“ You waste millions and millions of dollars annually sharpening hatchets on razor strops. Instead of smashing your bad work, and refusing to send it out as perfect, you tie a blue ribbon on it, and label it with a diploma. It is a shame! That is why the United States presents the singular paradox of spending more time and money on education than any other country in the world, and yet holds the real scholar in the least esteem. His place in your country is purely factitious; he fits in nowhere, for nobody really wants his scholarship, or appreciates and enjoys it. Your system of smattering destroys the respect which pure ignorance has for what it does not at all comprehend. Your dull boy studies

physics: and because he sees his teacher perform a few experiments, thinks he knows all about it, and as what he really *does* know amounts to nothing, he rates everybody else's knowledge of the subject by the light, or rather the darkness, of his own personal experience and he despises it.

"You force your best specimens of literature into the hands of ignorance and immaturity and because no thrill of the consciousness of higher power is possible to them, they think your great writers asses and dullards.

"I visited a class the other day, where a boy, forced to give his opinion of Emerson, deliberately called him a fool. Of course, he *was* a fool to the boy's dense folly. In another class, a girl refused to grant any superiority to Franklin, because he had broken his engagement with a young woman to whom he had grown indifferent. No man could *possibly* be great who would do such a mean thing as that, said little Miss with a toss of her silly head. Now, why was it necessary to disclose this interesting bit of biography to a girl, who had not sufficient experience in life to judge properly?

"But I find that it is a pet theory of your educational system to require every boy and girl to have an opinion, or to make one on the spot, if he hasn't one. Your English teaching is all based on that, and your pupils are graded on glibness. It is good training for an auctioneer; but I emphatically deny that it makes for culture. What opinion, original and true, coming from deep inner experience, can any ordinary child in his 'teens have? Criticism means *life*. *Live, feel, suffer*, that's the tax you must pay for the right to utter a literary criticism, or an ethical opinion worth having."

I was getting heated, and felt it time to stop, so excusing myself with an apology for my warmth, I bowed myself out of the principal's office, quite conscious that I was leaving him angered, and more confident than ever in the right of the American citizen to do as he

pleased. I find that when all other arguments fail, this one settles the matter conclusively.

From a consideration of the educational system itself, I turned my attention to the teachers. I visited the so-called institutes or periodical meetings of teachers for the purpose of discussing their work. Here I was astonished to find that the great majority of them were women, and that of these women, most of them were young, having taken up teaching not as a profession, but as a temporary method of earning a respectable living, prior to settling down in their own households. A bright, vivacious spectacle they made, but as for any serious attention they were giving to what was going on on the platform, they might as well have been at a circus. Indeed, they conducted themselves very much as if they were; whispering, laughing, eating peanuts, or chewing gum with no effort at all at concealment, and were several times called to order by the venerable chairman. I was so unfortunate as to be seated behind an elderly woman with a harsh, steel-like voice, who accompanied all the discussions from the platform with a running aside of bitter sarcasms, which, at last, annoyed me so much that I had to retire to a remote and deserted corner of the gallery in order to hear anything in peace. I was interested in what was said, if she wasn't, and thought that if she did not like it, there was no necessity of obtruding her misplaced wit on a public audience; and that she might have adopted the quieter method of some of her colleagues, who were undisguisedly reading newspapers or books. This was another striking example of the American way of doing what one pleases, but it made a very disagreeable and painful impression on me. My heart went out to the gray-haired educator whose task it was to impress these frivolous young women with the importance of their daily duties, but who were rebellious, uninterested, feeling themselves inconvenienced in their Saturday's shopping by a forced attendance at an educational meeting.

My heart went out to the multitudes of boys who were to be trained into virility under such petticoat government, and to the multitudes of young girls who ought to be trained to the serene dignity of perfect womanhood.

However, their conduct explained another anomaly in public school education here, namely, a total indifference to manners or personal bearing. Boys are allowed to lounge through the halls from class to class, their hands in their pockets, their books huddled under their arm-pits. They loll and lean over their desks in recitation—as do the girls. They chew gum incessantly, not even taking the trouble to remove it to answer a question. They reply with an Uh-huh for yes, and are not reproved for it. They wear rings on their fingers, and dirt under their finger nails. They push and rush and scramble to recitations, loudly laughing and talking, walk sometimes arm in arm, three or four abreast; in short, do as they please.

The girls over-dress in a painfully unbecoming way, looking often as if they were ready for a ball, instead of the school-room; and a great many use paint and powder, and provide themselves with mirrors at which they adjust their hair and give another powder-rag wipe to their faces between recitations.

When I spoke of this to teachers, some of them deplored it, and excused it, on the ground that parents resented their interference with regard to personal matters; and they were forced to accept what they could not mend. Sometimes I found a teacher so rightly conscious of her duty that she had courage to face unpopularity or the resentment of parents, and frankly tried to introduce a little order into this moral chaos; and whenever I met a teacher like that, I took off my hat to her.

It seems to me that the dominant fear of the teacher in the United States is the fear of unpopularity, and that efficiency in teaching suffers sadly from it. It is

this fear that pushes large numbers of wholly incompetent dullards from grade to grade, and diploma to diploma, until the day is coming, if not here now, when the word "diploma" will be as meaningless as the words "colonel" and "professor." It encourages the premature and unrestrained social intercourse of the young of both sexes, and all the weakness and follies that result from it in elopements and divorces. I heard a principal announce to his pupils from the platform a ball game to come off the next day, and add that every young man in the hall ought to be ashamed of himself, if he did not take a girl with him. More tickets must be sold. The team needed support. Did moral order need no support? No; it did not pay visible cash returns. It is this fact that crushes out all freedom of utterance: makes fruitless all freedom of thought. In the universities of Germany, a Haeckel may advance the boldest speculations of modern thought, and hold his chair as securely as the most conservative theologian. Not so in the land of freedom. He must do his thinking and talking in chorus. No solos allowed. Hence it is quite comprehensible that all free upward intellectual growth ceases when the censor's pruning knife ruthlessly and indiscriminately lops off the top branches.

There is, however, a stirring undercurrent of discontent among the most conscientious and thoughtful of older teachers, who have lived to see the fallacy of popular education as a universal panacea for social disorders, and a better day may come, if the discontent finds free expression.

"How long have you been teaching Latin?" I asked of one veteran school-master.

"Thirty-one years," he replied.

"And in that time, how many pupils have you taught?"

"I can't exactly say, but some thousands, at any rate."

"And of these thousands, how many, at the end of their four years' course, were able to read with ease, profit, or pleasure the Latin classics?"

"I can't affirm, without doubt, that there were ten of them."

"Then you have passed your thirty-one years at the task of the daughters of Danaüs, filling sieves with water?"

"It seems to me that I have."

"Can you tell me why you did not succeed?"

"In carrying water in a sieve?"

"Pardon me, the question was stupid. Then that means that an intelligence, curious, active, and retentive, is very rare?"

"Yes, *very, very* rare, especially one that is capable of impersonal interests. The ordinary mind is interested in itself, and in the little circle of facts around it. It is only by vanity, that it is induced to extend its circle. A man doesn't like another to out-do him in anything; therefore, he feigns an interest, of which he is not capable. Vanity keeps him at it, when he is tired of it; but that support withdrawn, he goes no farther. Ask of any first year Latin pupil why he is studying it, and ten to one he will tell you either that he expects to go to college; or that he has heard a good deal about it; or that he expects to study a modern language, and he has heard that Latin helps. But you see that Latin is not an end in itself, but a means to an end. His feeble curiosity satisfied, or his college exams. passed, he drops it; and what he has learned quickly fades from his mind. When a boy tells me that he is studying Latin to facilitate his mastery of a modern tongue, I tell him that he is acting exactly as a boy who would buy a pair of roller-skates, because he wanted to learn how to swim. Let the skates alone, and save time by plunging into the water at once. Strange! how these stereotyped ideas pass on from one generation to another, isn't it? When Latin was the only medium for written thought, there

was a reason for studying it, but why an ordinary intelligence should lose so much time now from what it *can* do, to waste it on what it can *not* do, is one of those impenetrable mysteries of human stupidity that ought to cease astonishing us, because they are so common."

I smiled and said: "Your reasoning about Latin, as a means to an end, seems to me to apply very well also to the higher mathematics. One hears so much about their value as an excellent mental discipline. Now, what do you think about it?"

"What do I think about it?" he repeated. "I think that the study of mathematics can teach you to reason about problems, but it does not follow from that, that you are able to reason about things with no figures in them;—the great problems of life—how to escape from a difficulty, how to recover your independence, when under the domination of a tyrannical passion. We hear, too, a very great deal of nonsense about the requirements of literary culture. But do the lives of literary men give us brilliant examples of temperance, chastity, prudence? On the contrary, they furnish the saddest history of human weaknesses and corruption that we have on record. And as for the intellectual value of mathematics and literature, would it not be proper to infer that those men who make of these studies their life-work in teaching them to others, would be national models of wisdom? But is that so? Is the schoolmaster the influential man? the builders of our railways? the founders of our commerce? Have they built our towns, furrowed the seas, written the books that have cheered the hearts of men from generation to generation? Aren't they, on the contrary, the helpless victims of the solidest, most exacting education there is—the education of practical life? Don't the real estate agents seek them out first of all to sell them the little lots remote from town, which in a short time are to be of enormous value and which they are receiving at specially favored rates, because they are *they*. If there are any

coffee plantations in the Orient, or down in old Mexico, selling off at immense bargains, aren't the school-teachers the first to be notified? Aren't the gold mines and the permanently flowing oil wells especially created for them, too? I speak knowingly; I have several hundred dollars, I can ill afford to lose, floating gayly in oil, but never floating back to me. And look through all the centuries at the school-master in literature. At best, he is a mild innocent with a bulging forehead; or a great ass, tumeified with pedantry. No, they say it is a dirty bird that fouls its own nest; but I have always thought that if there had been much of a man in me, I would have given over my task to the petticoats, and gone out into the world, and worked among men. The real, the only education that any man gets is that which he gives to himself. All that we school-masters can do, is to point out the road, walk in it ourselves, and give others the courage to follow us. We can't furnish them with carriages, or bear them on our shoulders.

"But I shouldn't like to leave the question of classical studies without saying what they have done for me, and what I have tried to make them do for my pupils. I am no cut and dried philologist. I care nothing for the word without the thought behind it, any more than I care for the dress without the person in it, and I have studied the ancients to know what they thought, and not to find in their language the roots of other tongues. Therefore, classic literature has given me a standard of values which I prize above everything else. The ancients have taught me what are the essentials of life. When I read them I am ashamed of the noisy boasts of our age, and I feel that we have little or nothing to teach them of permanent value in life. We have enormously increased luxuries and complications in life—we ride faster, we eat more things, we travel farther, we have substituted another mythology for theirs, but when you have said that, you have said about all; and in return, they can show us an immense superiority in personal

courage and endurance, and probity in general. There were no cushions between them and the earth; they sat harder it may be, but they walked better. With them, a progressive nation was one that carried its arts and sciences into other lands. They did it by force of arms, I grant it; but where they conquered, they civilized. With us, a progressive nation is one in which milliners wear diamonds, and servants silk dresses; and the daily laborer may live with his family in the kitchen and the attic of a mansion with a brown-stone, or marble front, by renting out all the habitable rooms; where the wash-woman may own a piano that nobody in the family can play on; and a cook can demand any price she asks, and then regard her services as a favor which she renders you. This is democracy; the reign of the average man, who erects statues to Dumas, loves in art the eccentric and the ugly, so long as they are novel or vicious, and gives his eulogies where he finds his material comforts."

I continued my search for information among the larger colleges and universities. Everywhere I received the same replies, the same complaints, uttered with more or less freedom. A great many deplored the effects of co-education, not only with respect to the increased facilities for the distractions of social life, but as lessening the solidity and profundity of the instruction. I remember that a professor of history, in particular, told me that his work was badly crippled by the necessity he was under of diluting his instruction, to make it palatable to his women students. Great social problems could not be probed to the bottom without offending their prejudices, or their fastidiousness. Almost all of them deplored the facility with which the doors of colleges and universities are swung open to admit the incompetent. In some cases, classes were deliberately formed to give employment to professors.

"We are engaged for the most part," said one of the men to me, "in trying to put a sharp, hard edge on a

leaden blade, to give the durable lustre of gold to a piece of brass. You see that that is not only an impossible, but a shamefully silly task. I come from my work, sometimes, cursing myself. I had been sowing good grain on sand. I had been giving my pearls to be trampled under foot by swine, and all that time I might have been doing something useful for humanity. Instead of that, I had wearied myself in a thankless and fruitless task. I feel that I am growing more and more incapable of any task worthy of me. But what can I do?"

"What can you do? You can stop wasting your time on imbeciles. For what you are doing is not only a waste, but it is treason to real intelligence. You are not dispensing light. You are giving a false lustre to ignorance."

"But if our classes diminish in size, we are reprimanded by our superior for too high a standard. It's numbers, not standard of quality, that the colleges want. If the classes grow too small, we lose our job, and yet we must live."

I had not the cruelty to give the response uttered once before to the same plea: "I don't see the necessity," but replied, "One can always plant potatoes."

But this question of a livelihood is the hidden rock against which so many good reforms are in danger of being wrecked. But it seems to me that it is an expensive way of giving them a livelihood, and that in the interests of solid learning and culture, both professors and students should be ruthlessly weeded out, if they are not serving the beautiful purpose for which they are in institutions of learning.

The multiplicity of books, the increasing number of public libraries, gives to everyone the chance for self-culture, and I know more than one man whose education, due to nothing but his own unaided exertions, would put to the blush that of many a distinguished college professor. What is the history of so many men

of genius of obscure origin? How did they acquire their knowledge? Incited by a veritable hunger for learning, they have searched the truth everywhere. They have been indefatigable readers; incessant thinkers and observers. Society was not a necessity to them; it was rather a shackle. "My leisure! my beautiful leisure; do not break in upon it, and steal it from me," was their constant wish, unuttered or spoken. What is it we search in society? Amusement, flattery. And what is the greatest, the most exquisitely delightful of all flatteries? Love. To be chosen from among thousands, to be caressed, to be adored! What is more delightful? How many eulogies we have written of it, how many snares we have laid to trap youth, and persuade it that the sum of human felicity is to be found in it. How delicious the new surprise of it, each time that it steals into the heart, anew; how desolate it leaves us when it fades away. How useless to preach that it, too, is a snare.

"La solitude effraye une âme de vingt ans."

We nearly all follow the same path, and buy our wisdom with our gray hairs. But having bought it, let us not keep it to ourselves. Let us give it to the young, by teaching them those old, old truths, old as the wisdom of the ancient philosophers and the ethics of Christ; and yet young as the lispings of infancy to-day, because immortal—the truths of the perishability of human works and human ties; the impossibility of their ever wholly satisfying the ceaseless hunger of the spirit; and that other gray, nun-like truth that perfect happiness is never found except in renunciation, that not until we are able to do without a coveted good, are we fit to possess and enjoy it fully.

Hard truths, these, to teach the young, and not to be taught by iteration, but by example and wise, careful, practical training. You cannot teach your daughter precepts of unworldliness and at the same time dress her sumptuously, and make her feel that her value depends

upon the richness of her wardrobe. She will take your dresses and leave you the precepts. You cannot teach her that true wealth lies not in the abundance of things possessed, but in the open humble heart, the inquiring, studious mind, and yet gratify her every desire for material pleasure, fix her eyes upon the shows of things and not on realities.

I say it sadly, but with confidence, and I would be willing to appeal to the experience of every teacher in the country, in support of the statement, that the great difficulty which teachers have to meet, in the training of the young, is that they are not given to them with clean, sound minds, eager for knowledge and already instinctively turning towards it, as the seedling climbs up towards the sun. Their work in the school-room does not begin with *doing*, but with *un-doing*, and alas! so often hopeless un-doing; for these boys and girls have begun life at the wrong end—begun by being men and women instead of children—begun by loving all the artificial excitements that stimulate the jaded worldling—and yet their teachers are expected to give them joy in the calm pleasures of the intellect—to make them love the school-room, instead of the ball-room—the dewy wild flowers of the meadow, instead of the luscious, heavy, languorous, perfumed roses of the conservatory—the lives of heroes on printed pages more than the pageantry of mimic life in the theater. It can't be done, any more than you can revive a taste for spring water in the wine-drenched mouth of an epicure. And yet, until you can do this, until you can fill the hearts and minds of our young men and women with a contempt for vain show, vain pleasure-seeking, selfish and cruel frivolity, until you can impart to them an eager desire to know the best that has been thought and said in the world, awaken in them that sane and exquisite delight in the beauty of the natural world which is the essence of true refinement, and make them feel that health, moral and physical, is beautiful, and sin and disease are

hideous, and that every human soul has its own peculiar responsibilities and duties, which it is base and cowardly to shirk—until you can do all this your fine schools are only whitened sepulchres, and you are not training the men and women demanded by modern civilization.

CHAPTER XI

AN EXPERIMENT IN ALTRUISM

THE general result of my observations and study of schools was to confirm me in my determination to use my material for what it was worth, and not put an artificial value upon it. I had one immense advantage over the salaried school-master, I was subjected to no temptation to cringe to authorities or to fear the results of unpopularity. I expected neither good nor evil of anybody; and I had been often enough disappointed in life, not to set out by expecting too much.

I returned home about the middle of September. The summer heat was over, but a great many beautiful days were in store for us before winter set in. I made regular tours of inspection about town; but found only ten boys to my liking, and of these, three abandoned their work at the end of three months.

I had resolved to build a laboratory for myself, or rather to transform the room which Abby had occupied into one. I am ashamed to confess that, after her departure, I had never re-entered her room. But I opened it, now, almost without thinking of her; but the memory is singularly responsive to suggestions and associations, and once in it, again, a faint sick longing seized me indescribably painful. It seemed to me that I had opened a tomb. I went out hastily, but felt that I had been de-testably weak, so hurried away to get a broom and a bucket of water. I opened all the windows, cleaned the room, and forced myself to whistle as I did it. But the whistle might have been a funeral march, for all the gaiety there was in it, and once or twice my eyes grew moist.

I called in the carpenters to my aid, I sent away for

my supplies, and, by the end of November, I had a fine little laboratory, with abundance of shelves covered with mysterious bottles. I destined my winters to chemical studies, in which I determined to interest my boys, if possible; but our first task was to clear off the land. They commenced with a fine healthy appetite for work. Their new axes, the novelty of their task, the sweet outdoor air, a definite aim in view, had much to do with it, no doubt. It is possible, too, that my presence, as their leader and director, the energy with which I worked alongside of them, helped to keep them in heart.

I chatted freely with them when the occasion presented itself; I praised them whenever they deserved it; and I demanded nothing of them, that they could not do well, by exerting themselves.

In our hours of rest, I directed their attention to the wild plants. I showed them the regular branching of trees, the provision which nature cautiously makes for next year's foliage, the nature of buds, their evolution and transformation. I talked of the nature of the soil, the manner in which plants are nourished, the necessity of knowing what mineral foods are most essential to the perfect development of the different esculent plants. That naturally led to their interest and share in the laboratory work. Here, I was pupil as well as master, and much the most ardent and curious of them all. I had always been interested in the exact sciences as opposed to those which are speculative. Of all the impertinences and follies of the human mind, that seems to me the most unpardonable which wastes a life-time in filling with mere speculations the abyss of our ignorance. But it seems to be an ineradicable defect of the human intellect. We divide and classify our ignorance, and give names to its divisions as we do to the imaginary canals in Mars; and try to sanctify it by blaspheming the name of science, in calling it science.

Henri Beyle says wittily of the Germans: "Saint Bernard, preaching to the Germans in a language of which

they did not understand a word, converted them by thousands. In our days, Kant has re-commenced this miracle."

All these searches for the absolute are only voyages in a very narrow circle, of which we are the center. There is not one inch of firm foot-hold outside of the worn pathway trodden by human experience; and yet this no-man's land of the vague and unknowable has been peopled from time immemorial by dreamers and charlatans, and the starved hearts of women, and will continue to be so peopled while men and women dream and hope and suffer. And there will also be a few sane minds who love to feel the solid ground under their feet; even when the ground is rough and stony, and must pierce the foot that treads it. They will be scorned by the vacuum lovers; branded as materialists, as if there were something infinitely shameful in believing that flesh and blood and bones are flesh and blood and bones, and the good brown earth is good brown earth; but let them pay no heed to the scorn, knowing well that the *vacuists*, if I may coin a word, are as much attracted to matter as we who aren't ashamed of it, and live in it quite as openly, sometimes even a little more flauntingly.

My studies confirmed me in the belief that what we call spirit is only a property of matter, that in man it shows itself as intelligence, in mute nature as motion; and I believe the time will come, when physicists will include motion as one of the indispensable properties of matter. That, of course, a property of anything cannot exist in the abstract goes without saying. Hence matter, and force, spirit, motion, or whatever you choose to call the animating quality, are indissolubly bound together, subject to unceasing change and transformations.

To see for myself, and to show to these young souls, some of these wonderful transformations, became, now, for many years the occupation of my life. I tried to in-

spire in them a love and respect for this mute, pregnant matter so often despised; to show it living, silently groping upward, concealing in itself miracles of beauty, ceaselessly circulating in countless forms, immortal, but protean.

However, I was not long in discovering that among my boys there were very few capable of sustained attention and prolonged study. Here, I made up my mind that not having any time to waste, I shouldn't imitate the public schools, and try to sharpen and polish my lead. I studied my boys attentively, unknown to them. I put them to the test in all sorts of ways; and when I saw a mind easily distracted, difficult to fix, indifferent to results, careless of the truth, lax in principles of honor, eager to pass for more than he was worth, vain boasting, glib-tongued, a loiterer, a procrastinator, I did not give him many chances to yawn in my face, or to take up the room of one more worthy than he. I sent him about his business, which was not mine, and thought myself well rid of him. I had an intense desire to find a boy after my own heart, who could enter into my studies with ardent zeal, and who from his youth could make that progress in them, denied to me, who had commenced so late in life. I had the great good fortune to find him at last, and counted myself the happiest of men in having found the fertile soil into which I could cast my grain, and hope to see it bear fruit.

He was the eldest son of a brave Scotch widow of remarkable good sense—a woman who earned a frugal living by her needle for herself and three children.

That which struck me most in Aleck during the first weeks of our association was his ardent love of truth. I have often remarked, since then, that this trait of perfect truthfulness is the distinguishing characteristic of a first-class mind. It is true that there is an age in childhood when almost every child is a liar; not through natural viciousness, but through an excess of imagination, in which the real and unreal are confused, or

through fear, or through vanity, the habit of lying from the last sources, being most difficult to overcome. But this impressionable, imaginative age passed, the good mind invariably becomes truthful, feeling shame over a lie, as the contemptible characteristic of cowardice. Then, too, the majestic beauty of truth is borne in upon him. He is, as it were, amorous of her, and he cannot suffer a lie to take her place in his warm heart.

This love of truth is the especial gift of the scientist, who must be ready to abandon his most cherished beliefs, as soon as he has discovered a fallacy in them.

My young Aleck had a mind in which this strong love of truth was united to an imagination, full of color and beauty—a rare combination, indeed. For there is a form of mind, cold, bare, in which truth assumes rigidity and an absolute tyranny. What we call a fine sense of humor is wanting to it. Such a mind has no wings; it cannot go far. Its truths do not attract us. We look at them and yawn. It lives in the forms of things, and sees no spirits in them. It is incapable of feeling the beauty and the disguised truths of poetry. It would ask of the *Iliad*, “What does it prove?” and before the fables of *La Fontaine*, indignantly demand “Can animals talk?”

My Aleck was far above this. His eyes of a deep blue, sparkling with intelligence, were made to delight in the colors of the dawn and the sunset, as well as in the soil under his feet. He had superb health, and at fourteen, the stature of a young athlete.

“Life is glorious, isn’t it?” I heard him say one day. “I am so much obliged to mother for having me. I don’t really know what I should have done, if I hadn’t been born.”

His nature was full of kindness, sensitive to suffering even of the meanest insect. I’ve seen him stoop to turn over an ugly black beetle that lay on its back, helplessly fluttering its thread-like legs in the air, in a hope-

less effort to get on its feet again. His intelligence was alert; no need to explain the same thing twice to him. But I did not know all his worth at first. I had to be teased by the stupidities of the other boys before I knew that I had found a precious stone among my pebbles. Then I saw the prospect of another friendship to be the joy of my declining years, as the friendship of my boyhood had sweetened my youth.

His example was a spur to the other boys; but there is no spur that has the power of being effective year after year, except that which comes from one's self; and although all my boys, who finished their years of probation with me, had learned with a certain pleasure the elementary facts of chemistry, that is to say, enough to make intelligent agriculturists of themselves, there was none but Aleck who persisted, after acquiring the necessary information. The power of patient observation and brooding reflection is a gift, not an acquirement.

As for the general success of my plans, I saw with pleasure a very respectable number of young boys grow up capable of earning an honorable and useful livelihood. I saw a general interest in horticulture and agriculture grow and spread around me; and I founded an agricultural school that has enriched the community in many ways; and I learned for myself that education means something quite individual, for it means putting a man into harmony with his environment; making him capable of using its advantages; giving him tastes, which it is possible to gratify in his hours of leisure, so that he may be delivered from the temptations and torments of ennui. The great trouble with most people is that they don't know what to do with their leisure hours. Man is naturally inclined to physical action, and loves the excitement of danger. He is born warrior and hunter; but civilization would make of him a man of peace and a vegetarian. She gives him a thousand artificial tastes in compensation for the stifling of his in-

stincts. Education gives itself the enormous task of modifying these instincts, to make them harmonize with artificial surroundings. What are all the crimes, perfidies, and hypocrisies of society but reverisons to these savage instincts, which make the foundation of every man. We are tamed bears with be-ribboned head-dress, made to dance, and taught to eat bonbons. But the master's whip out of sight, we go on all fours again, tear our pretty ribbons to pieces, throw away our bonbons and feed again on flesh and blood.

This is what our lower classes are continually doing. They fill their leisure hours with sensual gratifications. Go into any one of the great popular amusement parks of our large cities, and watch how the people amuse themselves. Their amusement is an interpretation of their daily life. They live half the time in public. Home is but a place to sleep, not always a place to eat. They spend a great part of their time in street-cars, elevators, railway carriages, subjected to the irritating influences of ceaseless noise and constant nervous jars. All the senses are so ceaselessly appealed to, that wearied, exhausted with over-work, the nervous system has lost its power to respond healthily to natural stimuli and constantly seeks novel excitements, for the sake of a pleasurable sensation. To gratify that sensation, we seek to startle, confuse and further excite the over-worked senses—speaking always to them, because we seem to have lost the art of speaking to the heart and brain. In this country we have not gone so far as the Parisians, who, to quicken their jaded senses, appeal to them all at once in certain dramatic representations in which a change of scene is announced by a differently colored light, while an orchestra plays in a different key, and an atomizer in the center of the theater disperses a different odor; but we aren't far behind it; we require to be tricked and amused like children, bumped and tossed and turned in scenic railways and “roulettes” and “ticklers.” We don't have bull-fights, but we must

feast our eyes and thrill our blood on mimic railway wrecks, steamer explosions, and other horrors too numerous to mention.

No fact or truth can get simply and quietly impressed on the public mind. It must be shouted, sung, danced, symbolized, and placarded on all our walls. Our churches built in the name of Him who had not where to lay his head, vie with each other in the splendor of their appointments, and women-journalists tell the fashionable world that their prayer-books must match their Sunday gown!

There was a time when men and women did not go to church to be entertained, to listen to good music and eloquent rhetoric, to look at beautiful flowers, to feel an æsthetic pleasure in the play of soft patches of colored light on stately pillars or frescoed walls. Not that I mean to say anything against the refining influence of music, art, and eloquence. I could not, were I to try, say enough in praise of them. They are the crowning delights of civilization. Only, the sweet voluptuous sensation arising from them should never for a moment be mistaken for a religious sentiment—for that pure, rapt, austere sentiment, which annihilates the body and its claims, and brings the bare cell of the devout monk nearer to the portals of heaven than the stateliest cathedral.

If Christ could enter one of our fashionable churches to-day, as he walked the shores of Galilee 1900 years ago, bare-footed, bare-headed, do you think he could utter there, with anything but irony, that profound truth:

“Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat or what ye shall drink, nor yet of your body what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than the meat and the body than raiment?” or:

“What went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? Behold they which are gorgeously apparelled and live delicately, are in kings’ courts.”

In her admirable criticism of German composers, Mme. de Staël says:

“Those who do not love painting in itself attach a great importance to the subjects of pictures. They wish to find in them the impressions which dramatic scenes produce. It is the same in music. Those who enjoy it but feebly, require it to be faithfully accompanied by words; but those whom music stirs to the very depths of their souls, regard every attention not given to the melody itself, as but an impudent distraction.”

I will add: It is the same with the sentiment of religion. If it needs to be fostered, as in the Salvation Army, by flags and uniforms and beating of drums, or in our fashionable churches by attractive music, eloquence, and extraneous decorations, it is felt but feebly, and exists for its accompaniments, and not for itself.

Along with this constant demand to be entertained in novel and exciting ways, there exists that effeminate shrinking from discomfort, that morbid sensitiveness to the impression of agreeable and painful things, which always accompanies physical weakness. It is an age of anodynes and sugar-coatings, in which the heroic element is stifled under cotton and cushion—an age in which to endure, to struggle, to fall and rise again, are old-fashioned virtues—virtues that belong to something wholesome and primitive in man, that civilization ought never to kill out, but rather to foster and develop.

I meant to foster and develop it in my boys. Experience had brushed the morning dew from my illusions. I knew that I couldn’t make angels of my boys, and I had no wish to try. I wanted to see them full-blooded, broad-chested men, ready to fight a man’s battle in life when foes assailed them within or without.

While we were clearing off the ground, or preparing it each year for the season’s sowing, there was no need of physical exercise. But there were long winter and autumn days—and days in spring, when nature was working for us and we had nothing to do; and

these were the days I wished to put to profit. We did a great deal of solid reading in them, and we played a good deal at athletic games out of doors. There is a child in every boy, and the child sometimes persists in the man to the end of his life, asking to be amused, or distracted. Women seem to be able to amuse themselves much better than men, or it may be that they bear idleness better. But for a man, there is no torture like that of having to sit around with his hands in his pockets, and yawn. He prefers any danger, no matter how hair-raising, to such an insufferable hour.

We played tennis, cricket, golf, baseball. We took long exploring tramps together, camping out, hunting, fishing. We climbed to the summit of Mt. Baker, and sat among the clouds. As for myself, I found the boy in me was as much alive as ever; I don't know that I have ever laughed more heartily in my life, or lived with a keener zest than in this free, out-door life, with my boys. The sun and the air got in at every chink of me, cleaning and healing old mental wounds, and filling me once more with the sap of healthy happiness.

Aleck passed hours in the laboratory with me, where we tried to surprise some of nature's secrets. We were amateurs in the noblest sense of the word, and though we surprised no new secrets, we confirmed the truth of many known discoveries; for example, that the leaves of plants are so many tiny laboratories where is formed the sugar that sweetens the roots of beets or the grapes of the vine.

From the sale of the timber cut from each boy's tract of land, he received a good round sum, and was permitted to use it in improving his land. It was one of my principles to give each boy as much liberty as possible, with regard to the use he made of his land, experience being the best of all teachers. Some of them, wishing to save a little money, bought a cheap quality of seed; but the result invariably showed them that much more is gained by perfecting a product, than

in increasing its quantity; and that one acre, well seeded, well cultivated, is more profitable than five acres of inferior quality.

I wish also to note here, that, as out-doors, we were not only farmers and athletes, but geologists, botanists and zoölogists as well; the interest which my boys began to take in the wild animals had, for its first ethical result, a very noticeable increase of genuine sympathy. The cruelty of youth, like its courage, comes from ignorance. I was amused in observing, at the commencement of our rambles, the general fear of everything new. A rare insect, an unknown plant, or animal, seemed noxious to them, and their first instinct was to kill it. But reassured by me, they began at last to feel that link which binds all creatures in a common chain of being—a feeling which enlarges the sense of life more than anything else, multiplying its sensations by a vivid sympathy. That is why science is the great civilizer; and morality without it, as a basis, is subject to terrible mistakes. I never forced moral precepts on my boys, but I never failed to seize an opportunity that thrust itself on me to inculcate an ethical principle, knowing well that we do not readily forget what strikes us through our interest, sympathy or by novelty.

It happened sometimes that a boy's illness prevented him from attending to his field, for a while. I wished them to volunteer their help, knowing that a forced magnanimity is an insult to him who receives it, and no virtue in him who gives it; and just as the only education that remains with us is that which we give ourselves, so the only well-rooted morality is that which is born in us of our relations one to the other, inciting us to action.

Therefore, I set them an example by showing a lively sympathy with the boy's misfortune, and they were thus induced to offer their aid. I remember one particular instance of their zeal. A violent storm had uprooted trees, dammed the natural bed of a stream and forced

it into a new channel, by which it destroyed a great part of one of the boys' fields. We all set to work to reclaim the soil, to build dykes, clear away rubbish, and force the stream to return to its old channel. It was difficult work, but we put a hearty interest and a good will into it, and were delighted at our success.

But because it was also one of my fixed principles that each boy should, as far as lay in his power, be independent in his work, I positively forbade any aid to be given to him who neglected his work for his pleasures or for his love of idleness; and if this negligence persisted, I took from the boy his right to retain the land, and put it into other hands.

So passed eight years, not without disappointments, hopes deceived, ingratitude at the hands of those for whom I had been a real benefactor; but, in spite of all that, with sufficiently satisfactory results to afford me no cause for repentance in the step I had taken.

We had created markets for our fruits and vegetables; a current of intelligent commercial activity circulated around us; an agricultural school had been founded, other industries, growing out of our efforts, had arisen; and we ourselves had not been stagnating.

My young Aleck was now entering his twenty-first year. He had built for his mother and the family a pretty little cottage on his land, and I have hardly ever known a happier, more contented little family. The mother never ceased to show the most lively gratitude to me for being, as she said, the "making" of her boy; and it was for them, as much as for me, a real *fête* day, when I consented to take a Sunday dinner with them. They would have liked very well to have me with them every Sunday, but I still had something of a wild flavor about me. I needed, from time to time, to bathe in this human river; but I always came out of it grateful for my tranquil solitude, where I bathed in another human river, that of the great souls who have enriched the race with their thoughts. The

man whom the hand of knowledge has once seized, never frees himself again. But I saw with a little quietude that my Aleck was following rather too closely my footsteps and seemed headed towards celibacy, where I was not so sure that he would find as much happiness as I. For it is very hard to free one's self from the example and prejudices of the race; and I thought I should like to see Aleck well married. I ventured to speak to him about it one day; and he frankly confessed that though he liked all the girls well enough, he hadn't found any one of them sufficiently attractive to compensate him for the loss of liberty. They talked such nonsense, too, that they tired him in the long run. I felt the force of the objection, and resigned myself to wait the arrival of the incomparable *She* whose nonsense would seem divine, and make the wisdom of the sages infinitely stupid in comparison.

CHAPTER XII

REUNION

ONE dreary day, at the close of November, not long after this conversation with Aleck, the following note was hastily delivered to me by a boy on horseback:

“George Graham: I believe in your generosity, and I need you. That is why I am writing you. My wife, for aught I know, is lying at death’s door with a new-born infant at her side. My other two children are hungry. As for myself, I am helpless, nailed to the floor by an accident which may prove fatal. I cannot say that I hope it will not prove so. You will come at once. I know you will. The boy who brings you this will tell you where we are and return with you, bringing along some food. I have also asked him to send out a physician and a nurse right away. Therefore, there is nothing for you to do but come yourself.

“Very truly yours,

“J. MCKENZIE.”

“Did you send a doctor out to him?” I asked the boy who brought the note.

“Yes, sir. Dr. Elbright.”

“What’s the matter with the man?”

“He has an arm and a leg broken.”

“What about the provisions?”

“I thought we’d get them on our way back through town.”

“That’s right. Did he tell you what to get?”

“Yes, sir. Tea, sugar, bread, and eggs.”

"I have all that here. Can you go out and saddle a horse for me, while I get the things ready?"

"Yes, sir."

I added a beefsteak, some bacon, and fresh fruits to the stock of provisions, and giving the hamper into the charge of the boy, we started off at once.

Is there so much of the selfish brute in us that we do not know how to forget and forgive? I blush with shame to confess it, yet my first movement wasn't at all one of pity. No, I felt a lively satisfaction. Time had avenged me. "*Il tempo e galant' uomo*," I said to myself with a smile on my lips, while hastening to her aid. Yes, it was of *her* that I was thinking, not of him. I had never made the slightest effort in all these years to know anything about her, where she lived, whether she was happy, or unhappy. But I had learned indirectly that she lived ten or twelve miles down the bay; and that she had had the first year of her marriage, a little girl who must now be nine years old.

We rode rapidly through the woods, skirting the bay. A fine rain, like a thick mist, shut out the view on all sides. There was something singularly in harmony with my feelings in this dull rain that gave no definite outline to anything. There was nothing well-defined in my feelings either, except a general sentiment of satisfaction. I did not try to fancy how she would look, after these years of absence. I did not trouble myself about thinking how I should greet her. But when at last I caught sight of the little log house on a side-hill clearing, overlooking the bay, looking so dull and lonely, with its background of somber pines and firs, something made my heart sink drearily. I saw her again, as I had seen her the last time, I heard the sound of her voice with its unforgettable accent, so rich and sweet; and it took real courage to alight from my horse and knock at the door.

A tiny girl, apparently six or seven, but who was older than she looked, opened the door, saying to me:

"Come in, sir. Papa is there," and she pointed to an adjoining room. "He is hurt very bad, my papa is, and mamma is sick, too."

She was a lovely child, with dark, wavy hair in pretty disorder, large, brown eyes, and the sweetest, little red mouth, just made for kisses. She ran rather than walked to the half-opened door, threw it open, saying: "They are here."

Yes, they were there. I should have known him anywhere, though he had aged and his hair was whitening. He lay on some bear-skins on the floor, near his wife's bed. But as for her, I would have passed her by, and never for a moment recognized, in the worn, thin face, aged before its time, and the sunken eyes that reddened with tears, as they looked at me, the woman whom I had so often called the joy and pride of my life!

All that was personal in my feeling for her, all resentment, all my cruel satisfaction in her woe, died in a moment, and I became human again. I saw nothing before me but misery, which it was in my power to alleviate to some degree. At a glance, I saw what was needed. A feeble fire was burning on the hearth, and on the bare table stood a half loaf of bread. The whole room had that sordid air which comes from neglect.

I approached McKenzie, first, saying: "I thank you very much for sending for me; but why did you not do it sooner?"

"It was not necessary until to-day," he replied, "but this little one," he put his arm around the child who had nestled on the rug close beside him, "my wife and the babies mustn't suffer. That's all the fire we have; the little one gathered the sticks near the house. I am afraid to let her go far away. Fortunately, the weather isn't too cold, only a little raw. The child was on the watch all morning for a passerby. Luckily a boy had come out for game; she saw him and I made a messenger of him, or God knows what would have become of us; for that's the last loaf."

"I thank you again for your confidence in me. There's a doctor and a nurse on the way. Are you suffering much?"

"Horribly, but never mind me."

I took off my coat to get ready for work, saying:

"What's your name, little girl?"

"Edith, sir, only I'm called Eda for short, and for petting. I like it best."

"Oh, do you? Well, bless your little heart, Eda you shall be to me. Now, can you help me to find things, Eda?"

"Yes, sir." She leaped from the floor, and at the same moment a pretty head looked out from the bed-clothes near his mamma. She saw it in a moment, and said with a funny little air of command:

"Lie down, Willie, you'll catch more cold, and make mamma cold, lifting the covers that way."

"I'm hungry," he whimpered.

"Are you, my child? Well, I've brought you something to eat and you are going to have it very soon."

I approached the bed, as I said this, and adjusted the quilt over the little shoulders. Abby was sobbing, her face covered with her hands.

"Abby!" I said gently. "Don't cry. Tell me what I can do for you first of all."

"Nothing! nothing!" she sobbed. "Nothing for me. Help them," and she buried her face in the pillow. I softly stroked her head. I would have done it had she been a perfect stranger to me. It was her suffering, not herself, that touched me.

"Trust me," I said, "a nurse will soon be here. You will have all the care you need now, until you are a strong woman again. I promise you that."

I caught a glimpse of the tiny baby asleep beside her. It looked healthy; and Abby herself did not seem to be in immediate danger, so turning to my little assistant, I asked: "Where is the kitchen, Eda?"

She took me into another room; there were but three rooms in all in the house. I started a fire in the stove, found a bucket in which the water did not appear to be fresh, and asked:

“Where do you get fresh water, Eda?”

“I’ll show you. It’s from the spring near the bay.”

I took the bucket, and receiving her directions, gave the bucket to the boy who had accompanied me, telling him where to get the water, and taking the hamper of provisions from him, returned to the house. When the boy came back with the water, I bade him gather us a good pile of dry fagots and pine cones, and then dismissed him with a fee.

Soon we had a good fire cheerfully roaring in the stove, and I fried my beefsteak. The child helped me to prepare the meal, washing and wiping dishes and bringing salt and pepper, and other things needed. Soon she came up close to me, and said with a sweet, childish coquetry, looking up and smiling:

“You are almost as good as papa.”

“And why am I not *quite* as good?”

She leaned her pretty head towards me—where do children learn these fascinating little ways?

“My papa loves me,” she answered.

“And I—don’t I love you, too?” I put down the fork which I was holding, and seizing her round the waist, I lifted her up, kissed the moist, red, little mouth; and she tried to hide her head on my arm, laughing with all her might. Such a dear, sweet, ringing, childish laugh! It had been years since I heard a laugh so young and buoyant as that, and I laughed too—and the boy in me came out of his hiding-place, and for a little while I was ten years old again. The child’s vocabulary came back to me. My work was play. I improvised a tray from a large bread pan, putting a clean napkin over it, and placing my beefsteak, a cup of tea, and a bit of toast on it, carried it, first of all, to McKenzie, whose heroic endurance of his agonizing situa-

tion touched me deeply. He drew his shirt sleeve across his eyes, and said to me hoarsely:

“I am full up to the throat. Let the others eat first.”

“No,” I said, “there is plenty for all. You and the little one may eat here, and I’ve this plate ready for Abby and the boy. By the way, do you know what Eda has just said to me?”

“No. I heard you both laughing. It was music to us. She has a sharp tongue, that lassie of mine.”

“She said that I was almost as good as you. That’s a compliment, isn’t it?”

“My God! what a sarcasm that must have seemed to you,” he murmured. “But you will let her still think I am good, won’t you? That’s all I have to live for. Otherwise, I——” here he made a significant gesture by drawing his finger across his throat. That was the first thing to recall to me our mutual relations. I had forgotten them utterly. Did he think that the past counted anything with me, now?

“Don’t be afraid,” I replied reassuringly. “What you are to the child, you shall be to me.”

Abby ate a little of the bread steeped in the savory juice of the steak, and drank a cup of tea.

The meal over, the doctor and the nurse appeared. At the end of an hour the capable woman had given an air of order and cleanliness to the room, the doctor had set the broken arm and leg, praising justly the courage of the man. It seemed that in pursuing a deer, and having taken an incautious step backwards, he had fallen from a considerable height, breaking his right arm and leg. After the first shock of the fall was passed, he had dragged himself a quarter of a mile home, arriving in rags, the skin mangled and torn, where he had lain exhausted, suffering agonies for hours, but bravely suppressing his groans, so that he might not add to the distress and anxiety of his family.

CHAPTER XIII

EDUCATING A GIRL

IT was six o'clock before I left the house. The mist had grown thicker, so that the trees looked like faint specters through it; but instead of impressions, vague as the landscape that surrounded me, I had now some very clear ones. All my past with Abby was as if obliterated, or rather the woman who had given me so much pain and so much happiness (let me be just, and remember that, too), was dead to me. The woman who lay there sick, suffering, was completely forgiven. I had ceased to love her. Strange that we never pardon fully, until we have ceased to love. I reflected with humility on this passion so violent, so exacting, alas! so transitory. I had loved a phantom woman, a smiling mouth, a cheerful eye, a skin all white and red. The eye had faded, the skin had grown sallow, the mouth no longer smiled, but drooped, and so she could never again make my heart beat fast and my pulses thrill with rapture. I felt even frankly grateful to the fate that had pronounced an inexorable "no" to our union.

But I quickly abandoned these reflections to ask myself what I ought to do for these helpless beings whom I seemed called upon to succor. The beautiful little girl attracted me powerfully. I would have asked nothing better than to see her every day and listen to her charming prattle. The father awoke in me at sight of her—that love so tender and sweet—the only love that can give a man tranquil nights and happy days. My imagination commenced to work. I saw myself her tutor, educating her into a fine girl, suppressing her weaknesses, guarding her against pride in her beauty,

filling her mind with solid virtues. And why not do it? Suddenly it flashed over me that she belonged somewhat to me by a tie of blood. I was her great uncle. And the other children were in some degree mine, too. Why not build a house for the family, not too far from mine, where I could look after their education, and bring them up properly?

I lay awake that night a long time revolving the pros and cons of this new project, and the pros had not any great difficulty in carrying the day over the cons; and breakfast over, I started again for the little hut.

I found everybody as well and as cheerful as could be expected. The nurse reported that Abby had passed a wakeful night, but was in no real danger. After these proper inquiries, I paved the way to the introduction of the subject which I had most at heart, and at last explained my hopes and plans to McKenzie. He reddened and turned nervously on the couch on which he had been placed in the room adjoining that in which his wife lay.

"Did the doctor tell you that it was all over with me?" he said at last.

"By no means; but he says that your recovery will be slow. However, that is not the question. The question is the education of your children."

"Yes, yes. I have understood that you've turned school-master. That is becoming"—he suddenly stopped as if ashamed of what he was going to say, and extended his hand, cordially grasped mine, and continued:

"I have no right to stand in my children's way, and I ought to be very grateful to you. In fact, I really am grateful. But hear me and don't laugh. I am the same man, and I am *not* the same man, whom you knew of old. It is the little one who has transformed me. Can you believe me?" He lowered his voice for fear of being heard in the next room. "My wife was very ill at her birth, and was a long time getting back her strength; so the care of the little one, from the

very first, fell on me. One finishes by loving very much whatever one takes care of, if it is only a beast or a flower. But when it is a being so beautiful, so perfect as she is, forgive me if I seem to rave—one ends by adoring her. She is so clever! the little chatter-box. She charmed you, too, at first, didn't she? *Le coup de foudre.* She does it with everyone. And don't you see? I can't bear to share her. I should like her to owe everything to me. There—that's the old man in me, again. You recognize him, don't you? But I loved her so that I choked back the cries of pain that were ready to break from me in my agony. I never did anything so fine in my life as that, and I did it to spare her pain. And I love her so well that I can restrain the cries of wounded paternal love, if you should succeed in getting the first place in the heart of my child."

I blushed in my turn. I understood that he was right to feel in this way.

"Mack," I said, using the familiar abbreviation by which I sometimes addressed him when we were in accord, "I was wrong. I deserve all the reproaches you wish to give me, but I must confess that if I had thought—"

"That I loved my wife and children?" he interrupted with an accent of malicious irony.

I was silent. I felt like a criminal. What right had I to assume that I could do better than he with his own? He was silent, too, evidently reflecting, for his heavy eyebrows were tightly knitted. I rose to say good-by, and at this moment the little girl opened the door and running towards me, put her arms about my body, and lifted her little mouth for a kiss. I stooped and kissed her.

"Come here, Eda," said her father.

She ran to him and caressed him.

"Do you love this gentleman?"

"Yes, and he loves me, too."

"Do you love him better than me?"

"No! no! no!" she said emphatically, "but he is good to you, and good to us all."

"You are right. There, run away to your mamma; I want to speak to him." He sighed heavily, and when the child was gone, he said: "I am a jealous egoist. I shall very likely never be anything else. You will very often regret your proposal of this morning, but I am going to accept it. I am even going to change front, and ask you to hasten the beginning of this *vie à cinq*. I probably need you more than all the others. I honestly believe that it's all up with me; and that it's time to be looking after the future provision of mine hostages to fortune. My wife has always regretted you. She has never once pronounced your name to me. That is why I know that she has been thinking too much of it. But both of you ought to be thankful to me for rescuing you from a ridiculous and impossible situation. You were trying to be friends and learning to be lovers. There is nothing in the world so unstable as the friendship between a man and a woman. Sooner or later, the unconscious attraction of sex asserts itself; and then friendship is over. I cut the Gordian knot for you. She has not always been unhappy with me. She has loved her children, especially the boy, who would have borne your name if her lips had been courageous enough to pronounce it. It was I who proposed calling him George. She paled and said 'No, I wish him to be called after my father.' Perhaps we can christen this last little fellow after you, but I shan't promise. But the girl—if there is any excuse needed for what we did—I offer her as the excuse. She had a right to be—eh? She has stopped my lips when a regret for the loss of my liberty would have passed them. She makes everything right, everything possible; but I shall seem to be in my dotage if I talk more of her. She is my life, that's all."

His lips trembled. I had no idea that he was capable of so strong an emotion. I thought of those fathers

with a genius for loving, who have made the tragedies of literature, the Père Goriot, the King Lear of the Steppes. Then there are such fathers. He might be one of them, and this radiant little creature made him tremble like a child.

I built the house for them, nearer the town than mine, and concealed from my own place by an intervening hill, covered with a thick wood. There, about a quarter of an hour's walk from me, sheltered from misery, they were to find a home for the rest of their days. My habits were not at all changed by this new interest which had entered my life. I still clung to my old home. I still looked after my boys, but I had a girl to educate now. That was all.

But how shall I explain this paradox? The more effort I put forward to succeed admirably, the farther from success I seemed to be. With my boys, I had clear, definite ideas. I understood them. I had been a boy myself. But a girl seemed to me to be a creature of another mold. I have come, now, to believe that after all, there isn't so great a difference between them as I then thought there was; and that the apparent difference is owing to the fact that the girl is earlier subjected to the restrictions of conventionalities than the boy, and matures more rapidly than he.

As to her future, that was the problem which absorbed me. First of all, I wished her to be wholly *woman*, and no hybrid creature with masculine tastes and airs. But when I came to question myself as to what I meant by that, I found myself falling into certain masculine prejudices, by which I wished her to please *me* rather than to please herself.

One day I had a long conversation with her father on the subject. It was the first year of his removal to his new home which he was not destined to occupy long. He died the second year after our reunion. He never recovered from the effects of his accident. A creeping paralysis seized him, which made him almost

helpless, but did not impair his faculties. All the rancor, all the antipathy he had ever excited in me had quite disappeared, leaving in me nothing but a gentle pity, and often a genuine admiration for the keen flashes of psychological insight, which he often showed in our conversations.

I saw, too, that the sharing of his daughter's heart with me was a bitter trial to him, and that he struggled manfully to suppress all signs of the moody fits that attacked him from time to time, and of which he was ashamed.

As for Abby, she had quite recovered, and went about her daily tasks with a calmness that was the reflection of the religion of resignation which she faithfully professed. I rarely saw her alone and we never made the slightest allusion to the past. Evidently, for her, as for me, it was buried without recall. She sometimes quietly expressed her gratitude for what I was doing for the family, but that was all. The gaiety, the caprice of her youth, had left her with her beauty; for, although she was not ugly, she was only the faded portrait of the pretty, vivacious girl of former days.

On the day of the conversation alluded to above, McKenzie had painfully dragged himself into the orchard after me, where the apples were ripening in the mild autumn air, and the golden-rod was sending forth its honey-like fragrance along the grassy borders.

The little one had followed us as usual, but seeing Aleck at some distance, she ran after him. For poor Aleck, she was the most fascinating, most capricious, and most tyrannical of little queens; direct result of his having deliberately spoiled her, in always giving way to her whims. She knew her power over him and abused it, as people with power always do when they can.

"What shall we do with that little miss?" asked the father, following her with eyes full of tenderness and pride. He hadn't the slightest jealousy of Aleck. He

was amused by the tricks which she sometimes played on him.

"That is the question of questions," I answered. "Neither you nor I are, perhaps, the best masters for a young girl."

"Oh, as for me, certainly not. You are right there. But what is wanting in you that you do not know how to guide a young girl?"

"A thousand things: first of all, I am not sure about what I want to make of her. Let's talk about it seriously. Perhaps by dint of reflection and discussion we shall dig up some good ideas. All that I know well, now, is that she is still a child and that we must patiently await the age of reason before we can decide on her future."

"What future is there for a woman except that of wife and mother? Isn't that the future of all women?"

"Yes and no. Mightn't you just as well say that it is the fate of all men to be husbands and fathers? Yet here I am, neither the one nor the other, and yet sufficiently contented and happy."

"By Jove, you're right. Well, what then?"

"We must bring her up a reasonable woman, give her all the educational advantages possible and then let her choose for herself."

"Yes," he said hesitatingly. "That sounds all right, but look here. Let us understand each other. I am not sure that I know what you mean by educational advantages. I think your ideas on the education of boys perfectly sound, and I think they may be applied to girls, too. Fit a girl for what she *can* do, and not for what she *thinks* she can do. I am dead set against the chinch-bug that wants to be a butterfly; the mole that aspires to the piercing vision of an eagle; the cabbage that would prefer to be a rose; the tallow-candle that wants to be Arcturus."

I laughed and said I was exactly of his opinion.

"Well, do you think Eda has any particular gifts?"

"She has a voice of remarkable range, Mack."

"That only means that she has wit and quick feeling. Voice expresses feeling by the range of pitch, loudness, timbre. Have you ever noticed that imbeciles and feeble-minded, as well as dull persons, have little or no vocal range? They express themselves in a dull, monotonous, lifeless way, which corresponds to their deficiency in intellect and feeling. Excitable persons, on the other hand, have great vocal range. Eda is excitable. And, do you know, one of the very things I have to thank God most devoutly for, is that she *hasn't* musical gifts; so don't let's go to work incubating them for her. There is more money and time wasted on music than would wipe poverty from the face of the earth. Did you ever board in your life? Do you remember the parlor piano? and the young man with the flute in the next room? and the fellow with the feet and the violin over your head, and you don't know whether it's the feet or the violin that are coming through the floor? Let's not put Eda into that class. Let's keep her hands virgin. She is as natural as a wild flower; don't you think so?"

"That is her greatest charm."

"Very well, we won't spoil that either by any of your fashionable boarding-schools. Let's keep the dew in the heart of our wild rose as long as we can. God knows the sun of worldliness dries it out soon enough! Why spoil her simplicity by putting her among girls who are no longer girls except in years? You see, I can't bear to be separated from her. I don't want her to come back to me a little worldling, her head full of follies and vanities, inflated with ideas of grandeur, discontented with home, ashamed of her mother and me, because we are no longer young and brilliant. Beautiful as she is, infinitely dear as she is to me, fresh as that flower at your feet, I would rather see her stark and cold in death than come back like that to me."

He drew his shirt-sleeve across his dripping brow,

and I saw that he was trembling violently. I hastened to reassure him, and bade him sit down on the low stone orchard wall.

"And what makes it more dangerous to send her away," he continued, "is that she is cursed with beauty. I say it advisedly, cursed with beauty; because she pleases without the least effort on her part. She does not have to be obliging, good-natured, clever, sympathetic, helpful. She has simply to show herself to be charming. I have known beautiful women who were monsters of egotism, and might have been saints, if they had only been ugly. But we shan't spoil her. I notice that you never tell her that she is pretty. Neither do I; sometimes I even tell her that she is an ugly little puss, when I think she's setting herself up from a look at the mirror."

I listened to him with great satisfaction. We weren't far removed from each other in thought. The love of this charming girl had brought us together.

"I am entirely of your opinion," I said. "We shall keep her with us. But do you know what I was thinking while you were talking? It is this: That we men are always thinking of women in relation to ourselves, and never with regard to their own peculiar individuality. Now, it may happen that a woman's individuality is marked enough to warrant her in taking her fate in her own hands, and living her life according to the dictates of her best feelings. Now, we should think it very droll if women were to assign us our life-rôle on condition of undertaking to protect and care for us. Woman has become dependent on man through the social institutions which make of her the home-keeper, and of him the bread-winner. The dependence is not felt when the relations between man and wife are what they should be; but how common are such relations? Woman sometimes degenerates in the compact, and vain, puerile, egotistic, by her extravagance changes her husband into a mere drudge and money-

machine to satisfy her caprices. Or, the woman becomes the household drudge and the suffering is reversed. I would have every woman so far independent by the resources of her brain or her hand, that she need not fear a life of solitude, if she cannot find her mate, or having been deceived, finds life impossible with the man she has chosen. I want to make Eda independent; that's what I mean by giving her the best educational advantages."

He quite agreed with me on the aspect of the question and urged me to take wholly upon myself the task of educating her and the two boys.

As for Abby, she was quite charmed with the idea, but one day she said to me:

"I feel sure that you will not misunderstand me. There is one thing that troubles me and I must be frank with you. You know that while I esteem your opinions higher than my own or those of anyone whom I know, I am still forced to disagree with you on one vital point—vital to me, at any rate, for it makes life possible. I mean religious faith. I wish my children to be brought up in the faith that has saved me. Promise me that you will not insinuate into these young minds, who adore you, any doubt of this reality of realities. If I were capable of teaching them I should hesitate before giving them to anybody; for, he who teaches a child becomes the mother of its soul. I have given them their body; it is you, now, who are going to furnish it with a soul that can think."

I was silent a moment, for I, too, think that the first necessity of any serious conversation is frankness; but frankness is not always incompatible with a discreet silence. After pondering a minute, I said:

"Abby, I never wantonly destroyed anybody's faith; for that might mean wrenching a cripple's staff from his hand, or stealing the bread of life from a starving soul. Any faith is good that keeps the life clean and the heart full of courage. I can promise you, then,

that as long as your children believe they shall not be disturbed in their faith by me. But if the day should come that the scaffolding is ready to fall, and there is danger of their being hurt by its fall, that day I shall speak with perfect frankness, giving them certitude for doubt, fixed principles for dissolving faiths, ardor for indifference. For me, to whom religion is nothing but poetry petrified into dogma, the recognition of its real character does not in the least change the value of its moral precepts which have been given to us by social experience. It still remains a crime to murder, a sin to steal, a want of good faith to lie and deceive. It is still a duty to help others, even if it should not be possible to love them as ourselves; and it is our duty to refrain from injuring those whom we dislike—which is, perhaps, better for them and for us, than to love them with our tongues and hate them in our actions."

She colored to the roots of her hair, and looked ready to burst into tears. I felt immediately that she had misunderstood me, and could think that I had had the bad taste to allude to the past, which was far from my thoughts. To assure her that I was only speaking in a general, purely impersonal way, I continued:

"It is, perhaps, in bad taste to allude in this way to the cruelties of the church, which, in the name of Him who said 'Love your neighbor as yourself' subjected the honest doubter to the most infamous tortures, or burned him at the stake; but I am always nettled at the supposition that there can be no morality without a profession of faith to which is attached a hope of heaven or fear of hell. To me, to love the right, because it *is* right, and not because you are to get a sugar-plum for it, or to be whipped if you don't, is a far nobler love than the interested one, and much more to be depended on."

"Forgive me," she whispered.

"There is nothing to forgive. Do you trust me?"

"Yes," she answered firmly enough now. "I trust

you and put my little world into your hands, very fearlessly. But take especial care of Edith. Her father adores her, but he takes good care not to tell her all he thinks."

"I know how to be discreet, too."

At this moment she came running up to me, calling me as was her wont, "Papa George." We could never get her to say uncle. She said it wasn't a pretty name; and she *hated* the word.

"O, Papa George! Papa George! I've something to show you. No, mamma, I don't want you to see it"; and she put her right hand into mine and with the other made a sweeping negative gesture towards her mother.

"And why not?" asked the latter. "You're always having secrets with Papa George or Aleck and never with me. Very well, I'm going to have my secrets with Willie and Bob."

"That's it exactly," she exclaimed, frowning darkly and stamping the ground. "You can't keep a secret to yourself. You promised me not to show the other bird's nest that I found, and you told Willie the first thing, and he wouldn't let it alone."

"Oh, then it's another bird's nest, is it?"

Furious at herself for having incautiously betrayed her secret, the little one screamed out:

"No, no."

"What!" I said. "Isn't it a bird's nest?"

"Yes," she whispered, turning her rosy face to me.

"Then tell mamma that she was right, my girl, and we'll go and look at it."

I had said it very tranquilly, but firmly.

She hesitated a moment. She was a most rebellious little soul; and I had had my little scenes with her before; and although I was flexible as wax on a trivial question, I was hard as iron on a principle, and she knew that I loved the truth. She pulled at my hand as a sign to go, but I stood quite still, holding her fast;

then rapidly, as if the words were burning her tongue, she said:

“Mamma, you are right.”

I insisted on nothing more. I felt the fever of impatience in her, the anger badly suppressed. The child took after her father in what was most characteristic in him—his love of liberty which felt the least restraint as a heavy burden: his love of out-door life in the sun and rain, and she promised to be one of those women who despise the weaknesses of their sex, and aspire to the liberties of their brothers. There was something in her nature capable of great excess or great perfection. She would go far in whatever direction she turned; and, therefore, she was sometimes the despair of her mother. I do not know how I had obtained an empire over her; perhaps, because I loved her wisely and without foolish indulgence, wishing to be loved by her with what was best and most permanent in her, and not by what was selfish and capricious. It sometimes cost me a good deal of self-control to resist her little coaxing ways, when she wished to escape from some duty or task; but I made a resolution from the very first to guide and not to be led, and never to dispute with her, or *reason* with her, as the euphemism of our days has it. I knew from observation that there is nothing so futile as these so-called *reasonings* between children and adults. They are taught to argue expertly on their own side, and the argument finishes usually by the yielding of the adult, because he has no longer the capacity for blind persistence that is a trait of youth. Thus they are taught to despise counsel that so readily yields to their arguments, and to lose respect for the counselors. Age, to them, is no longer a crown of dignity, a fruit-time, for which the blossom-time existed, and therefore we have at present the pitiful spectacle of an old age that asks pardon for being old; that feels itself pushed to the wall and in the way everywhere; and with tragic facetiousness tries at times

to deny its age as if it were a crime, and says to youth: "I am as young as you; I am seventy years young. My heart and my hair are not the same date," forgetting that youth with gray hair is as abnormal as decrepitude at twenty. To be respected, one must be respectable. Let age cease its grimacing and enter upon its inheritance. Wisdom, dignity, moderation, enlarged sympathy, tranquillity, the possession of one's self—these are the fruits of right living. This is old age, full of service still. It holds out the hand to give, not to get. It demands nothing. It knows how to accept what is due it, with gratitude. It sits a spectator in the theater of life, but an interested spectator, who knows how to applaud and encourage in the right place.

I, too, had my days of anxiety over "the little one," as her father so fondly called her. I watched her closely, I studied her, I tried to glide into this child's soul to find the world new again. I was gay, grave, even severe, if it were necessary, and it was sometimes necessary in order to escape this furious tyranny of young desires, so strong, so persistent.

She hated dish-washing, sweeping, and all household tasks, and Abby, who was in her element there, would willingly have spared her them; but I insisted that she should not be spared. I wished to make her equal to anything. In the division of labor, that of the household naturally falls to woman, and her training there must not be neglected. Besides that, even the happiest life offers no uniform picture of unaltering bliss; and shoulders must be trained to bear burdens that they may not droop and faint under them when life offers them.

CHAPTER XIV

A BROKEN SPIRIT

My relations with the children gave me ample occasion to see the result of this marriage, of which the only foundation had been caprice and instinct. I cannot truthfully say that it was more unhappy than ordinary love marriages are. In fact, to the cursory observer, it might even have passed for a very happy and successful one. But that marriage only is successful in which the two spouses attain the full development of which they are capable; their minds maturing and bearing the fruits of magnanimity and wide sympathies. But these two had both suffered, narrowed. It is true, that the man had gained in suppleness and gentleness; but the gentleness was that of a wild animal grown old in a cage. It was rather a loss of ferocity than a transformation. He was still at bottom the tiger—but a lethargic, toothless tiger that yawned and fed on pap, and bit and tore no longer.

One day, shortly before his death, he was dragging himself along in the sun beside me, when I stepped in front of him to remove from his path a branch of pine which the wind of the preceding night had torn from the tree.

He uttered an oath: I turned around astonished. I thought that he had hurt himself.

“No,” he said to my inquiry. “It’s nothing, nothing at all,” but his face was burning as if lighted by some interior fire.

“It is only an explosion of some remains of volcanic fire in me,” he said. “Ruined! ruined! dragging my rags of flesh about, when you can leap, yet, like a boy:

and I ought to have the same physical energy as you. But I have lived! I have lived!" he cried in a sort of savage rage. "I have known the joy of throwing myself on social conventions and breaking them like glass. I have had the courage to seize hold of what I wanted and devour it while the appetite was strong. That is harmful to the digestion, you say. Damn your laws of digestion! A good mouthful is worth a belly-ache. To creep along all your life with your head bent down for fear of cracking it against some overhanging beam—what hideous cowardice! Thank God! I never was a coward like that. To live in the sunshine with an umbrella over your head for fear of feeling some water on your shoulders—what a dog's life! I never did it. Well, you say, you live now with your hand stretched out."

A great pity filled me for this soul in torture trying to reason itself right in its life-course.

"My friend—my dear friend," I said with energy, "don't say that. It hurts me. It is I, not you, who live on charity. You brought into the dawn of my old age, new duties, new sentiments for which I thank you with all my heart."

He shrugged his shoulders.

"Yes. I understand *you*," he continued. "You are one of those weaklings that civilization makes, who search happiness among women and children. I am a man, wholly a man, conqueror not conquered. I was never meant to be chained to one spot even by the most flattering sentiments. But look at me now. Is there any fate viler than mine? A child has subjugated me—the dimpled hand of a girl-baby."

"My wife was not mine a week before I could have quitted her without a sigh. Why didn't I do it? I felt a little spite against you. You had been very uppish with me for a long time. Oh, I saw it all, though I never let on. And I kept her, because I did not want to send her back to you. That is also why I treated

her well enough, in keeping for myself as much liberty as I could. And she, with her insipid affectations of religion, felt it a point of honor to play the Griselda. I have never really known whether she loved or only tolerated me. Then the little one came, but I have told you about her, and how my real slavery began."

"Don't talk like that, I beg of you."

"Oh, no," he said ironically, "I should rather call it my renaissance, or my resurrection. I know all your ideas—feminine ideas. But listen to me. There is not a sentiment that has crippled so many souls, shed so many tears, broken so many hearts, ruined so many lives, kindled so many wars, spread so much disaster everywhere, as love. And there is this devilish thing about it that we always think there is something noble in losing ourselves in another. For a woman, it is a necessity to lose herself this way. Hers is the task to sacrifice herself for the race. But why should *we* accept her definition of love? Why should we muffle ourselves in the faded illusions which she is always steeping in some new dye to make them look brilliant? I am speaking abominations to you. Well, that's because I'm not you. Your laws are not my laws. Liberty is my law. What you call good is *not* good to me, it is evil. And when I do what you call evil, something sings in me, and tells me that it is good."

He was terrible at this moment, his eyes rolling wildly, his hand lifted as if he would strike a death blow. His lips seemed like the mouth of a serpent emitting poison. I felt the uselessness of all argument with this soul in revolt, which felt the sting of the iron he had riveted upon himself.

"What is religion," he went on, "but a confession of weakness or malady in the soul. And what is love but another malady, which we do not try to cure but to prolong. I wish to be cured! Without this cursed malady I should have left my wife and all this domestic cowardice, that is no more suited to me than to the

eagles of the air. I should still be a man, not crippled, ruined for life. Never again shall I feel the icy air of winter whip my face. I am not one of those anaemic creatures that tremble when the north wind blows. It was made for my lungs—that north wind, and I have sunk so far that I can contentedly fill them with chimney-smoke! Come, you called yourself my friend. Prove to me that you are. Tear me from this slavery. Break the chain of my daughter's love for me. It is the last chain that throttles me. O my God, who can give me back my lost strength, the iron energy in an iron body!"

At this moment the cry of a child reached our ears. We turned around hastily. The little one, running after us as fast as her little legs could carry her, had stumbled, fallen and hurt herself. We saw blood on the distorted little face, pitifully lifted from the ground. He was at her side in a moment. How? I don't know. These marvels happen from time to time, to mock our material theories and make us see the superhuman force of a great emotion. It is as if the soul had received an electric charge, and passed it into the feeble body to give it back its strength. He held the child in his arms. His face had become human again—radiant.

"It is no use," he murmured. "Here I am, a willing slave again."

With these words, he trembled. The crisis had passed. He very nearly let fall the child whom I took from his arms. I supported him, almost carrying him to the house, where his strength, as if it had been but a great effort of the will, entirely left him. Abby helped me to put him on a couch, from which he was fated never to rise. He died two days later.

His death gave me much to reflect upon. Violent and erratic in his feelings, the suppression of his desires must have often appeared an outrage to him, and led him to adopt a code of morals in which desire was the only guide to action, and moderation seemed to him

weakness. That he must often have suffered, I have no doubt; but I believe that, of the two, his wife had suffered the most.

She never complained to me; but there was in the perfect effacement of her life, her silence, her devotion to her religion, traces of suppression just as marked, which in her sensitive temperament indicated a sharper degree of suffering. She had taken refuge in religion as one takes shelter in a storm. She had learned to accept her lot. Was her resignation a fall? Resignation is not always a virtue. It is as often the cowardly abandonment of the best that is in us in order to live in peace with what is mediocre. Did her duties weigh heavy on her? I do not know. She performed them without complaint. Hers was one of those natures profoundly moral, which make the stable element of our civilization. Misguided by passion, she had for a moment hesitated on the path of rectitude—and all her life she had felt that this hesitation was a blot on it. No other course of action could have resulted happily for her. She had none of those false, sentimental ideas about the divine right of passion which lead astray so many weak heads. She would never have had the baseness to gild a wrong in order to make it pass for gold. Suffer? Yes, she could do that. A greater than she had suffered—the Divine One. She turned to religion—became devout, calm, serene, grave. She was not always consequential; she made her little mistakes like the rest of us, but one felt that she could be trusted, that she was not one to be blown here and there by the wind of caprice. She knew, with all her heart, that passion cannot be made a law of life, but that duty is the only fundamental guide. She warmed her heart in the love of her children on earth, and of her God in heaven. That sufficed her.

When I began to know her well, she interested me by her character. I had loved her beauty, her freshness, her gaiety. They were gone. I could never love

her again in the old way. But the sentiment which she awakened, though much colder, was permanent. We were friends now.

She bore her husband's death with a tranquillity which was not indifference. She had forced herself to find much that was admirable in him and had succeeded. "He was a good father," she said to me one day, "and he wished to be a good husband; and, on the whole, I think he was. I don't know whether I can make you understand exactly—but there was a grain of folly in him, a sort of mania for liberty. He could not bear contradiction, nor the slightest appearance of force. I soon learned that. I had a sincere friendship for him, and that is not so exacting as a passionate love."

She was right; and, perhaps, marriages, to be permanently happy, must settle at last into this condition of companionable friendship, wholly free from illusions, and full of mutual forbearance.

CHAPTER XV

BOOKS AND TRAVEL

BUT if the wife bore the loss of her husband calmly, poor little Eda was almost crushed by her father's death. It seemed to age her ten years. But, little by little, nature and time brought their healing, and she became once more sound and strong. She seemed to redouble her affection for me, as if fearing to lose me, too. We became almost inseparable companions during our hours of leisure. When the two boys were old enough to commence their book education, she was eager to help me teach them, that we might have more time for our daily reading; for I had early commenced, either to recount or to read to them, the great masterpieces of the world, in order to enlarge for them the little sheltered corner of it which we inhabited.

John Bunyan had his place in these readings; for there is so much poetry, so many profound truths in this old classic, that it is a pity to relegate it to the top shelf of the library. It ought always to be within reach of the fingers of the young, in spite of its obsolescent theology. Do we reject the beautiful fables of Greece, because we no longer offer sacrifices to Jupiter? How many times I have encouraged my little family at the threshold of a difficulty by saying:

“What! Are you in the clutches of Giant Despair? Do you mean to let him crunch your bones?”

Children dearly love the world of fable and fiction, and modern education does them a great wrong in wishing to substitute for it only the naked truth. There are beautiful truths which insinuate their way into these little brains prettily clothed in the sparkling veils of the

fairy world. As for Don Quixote, he was a veritable feast for them. In our walks together, we often humorously employed the extravagant language of chivalry, borrowed from the famous knight, or from Walter Scott. What thoughtless and healthy peals of laughter rang through the forest at little Bob's "*Avaunt, vile caitiff!*" his pretty blonde head thrown back, in his hand a willow branch in place of a sword, in all his tiny body the attempt to reproduce the haughty or threatening air of a chevalier, or a brigand.

How many times we transformed ourselves into explorers; and so many countries and so many climes were mingled in our northern wood, that it was like an enchanted one. I steeped myself again in this pure stream of youth, and felt my life rich beyond expression. Old-fashioned books, you will say, and not much read now, these which I have mentioned; yet, I pity the child who has not once looked at the world through the eyes of Walter Scott. We can't read him after our first youth is past with that perfect abandonment which comes with innocence; but it is good to turn back to him, from time to time, at any stage in life. What lessons of honor, courage, purity, we can draw from this world in which the odor of forests perfumes the air, instead of rose water; where love is not an insidious poison undermining courage and virility; where pain is frankly, proudly accepted as an inevitable element in life. Bravo, Walter Scott!

We had fine heroic days with Plutarch, too. As for Addison, the girl who has once read him with pleasure is saved from the follies of her sex; and my Eda loved Addison.

So passed our days, full from dawn to darkness. I taught Eda French and German, and as she showed a real talent for acquiring languages, I yielded to her entreaty to teach her Latin. And in all this time of quiet happiness, one tiny cloud, alone, rose above the horizon. As Eda grew into maidenhood, I saw that

my Aleck was setting all his brave, faithful heart on her. Did she know it? Certainly. What woman does not know that she is loved? And did she love him in return? No, and there was the cloud. Did she not even like him? Oh, yes, very much indeed. And she had other admirers? Scores of them; but she cared nothing for any of them. Aleck had no rival.

Then the old question, What shall I do with her? began to torment me again; and I determined to travel with her for a year or two, in order to see what solution to Aleck's problem, absence and an entire change of scene might bring. To be sure, he was about twelve years her senior, but he was in the fresh vigor of early manhood and had not wasted his strength in dissipation; and he was so entirely superior to most young men of his age, that I could think of nothing better for her than to join her young life to his, in mutual respect and love.

But I did not wish to take her abroad before she was sufficiently mature to profit by her travels. The story of the German gosling that flew across the Rhine and came back a goose, is the history of all immature travelers. They boast a cosmopolitanism, which is nothing but a profound indifference to all countries, and a general dissolution of nobler sentiments. This is very different from the cosmopolitanism which embraces all nations in a more perfect, more intelligent love. The first cosmopolite is a man without a country; the second is a man of all countries.

At nineteen, one is ordinarily still too young to travel with entire profit; but Eda had received an exceptional training; and I thought her mature enough to travel with advantage. I thought it best to see America first, because after having enjoyed the wealth of associations in those old countries whose very soil speaks a human tongue, the mute landscapes of the new world seem a little monotonous and dull.

We skirted first the Pacific Coast from Vancouver to

San Diego, and it was a perfect delight to me to note the fresh joy of this beautiful girl unspoiled by the artificial life of cities. She would have been the most agreeable of companions for anybody. Nothing inconvenienced her; accustomed to long tramps in the woods, where she must encounter all sorts of obstacles to easy walking, she seemed not to know that dust and mud existed. She was simple in her manners, without being awkward, naïve without being ridiculous; she was keenly interested in everything that she saw, but never obtruded her interests where she thought they were not shared. She was magnanimous and sympathetic in a sweet, fluid way that made itself felt without being embarrassingly noticeable; and, rarest of all virtues in a woman, she was capable of silence in the right place; so that one could enjoy his impressions with her in that incommunicable, subtle personal way which belongs to solitude; and she could express her pleasure in fit terms without employing meaningless and ridiculous superlatives. I hate to talk with a woman who calls everything "grand" or "dear."

We saw the snow on the summit of Popocatepetl. We ate mangoes in Maximilian's gardens at Cuernavaca; we walked under the mighty cypress trees of the Montezumas; we looked out on the St. Lawrence from the citadel of Quebec; we walked in the grassy meadows of Acadia; and, at last, we set sail for Europe.

I did not intend to make of these years of travel, years of idle pleasure, but of active pleasure. I wished to free my girl from provincialism; let her see that wherever she might go, she would find a ceaseless force impelling the human mind to activity. Art, literature, history, music, occupied our leisure. I chose the great representative cities of Europe to tarry in: Paris, London, Edinburgh, Rome, Venice, Naples, Berlin, St. Petersburg. I avoided as much as possible a long stay in a large hotel, for the reason that they are all alike, and one seems to be traveling in a cage, shut up with

the same restless, chattering crowd, all looking through the bars at a new nation. I preferred to get out of the cage and see the people face to face in the smaller pensions, where one's own countrymen are rarely found.

Of all the cities in which we stopped for any length of time, Edinburgh and Naples pleased us the most, and two cities can hardly be more different. That I should love my own Auld Reekie was very natural. I had her blood in my veins. But Eda loved her, too, history and literature supplying the lack of personal souvenirs. She re-read the "Heart of Midlothian," and sat through a service in St. Giles's Cathedral. We recited Scott's apostrophe to Edinburgh from the summit of Blackford Hill, looking out on the gray city, bathed in the morning light.

At Naples, we rented an apartment of four rooms, and my girl undertook to keep house with the aid of a little Italian woman. She commenced the study of Italian with a mature woman, a native of Florence, and during her lesson hours in the early morning, I went out for a walk in the Villa Nazionale overlooking the bay. These solitary walks, in which all my life seemed to unroll before me, were not the least delightful hours I passed. Seated on one of the benches in the park, under a cloudless sky, the bay before me, at my feet, on the sand tiny ants tracing zigzag lines here and there, I seemed to dilate and absorb all the life around me, sentient and insentient. The trembling patches of sunlight on the rough tree trunks, the waving shadows, the splashing of the water in the fountains, the daisies with their white crown and golden heart, the soft grass with its varying shades of green, the delicate blue mist which veiled the distant shores of the bay, the sparkle of the blue water under the perfect sky—all this penetrated me with a delicious tranquillity; I seemed to drink in rich deep draughts of life, and to see its sunset hues more brilliant than the hues of dawn.

But I had other hours full of joy with my Eda. It

seemed to me that I had never so fully possessed her, never so perfectly known her, as now, when we were all in all to each other. Her beauty made her welcome everywhere, and she had her adorers among these inflammable sons of the South: some of them even went so far as to ask her *ir* marriage a few hours after having met her.

CHAPTER XVI

TEMPESTE D'ANIME

ONE evening after an experience of this kind, we were sitting on the balcony which looked out on the heights of Posillipo, and the bay. The night was superb with all the languorous beauty of a Southern summer. A young man and a girl, both dressed very fantastically, were singing in rich clear voices a popular song, "O Sole mio," down in the street below us. I was smoking a cigar, my feet resting on the low railing that enclosed the balcony.

Eda drew her chair up close to mine, and putting her arm around my neck and her pretty head on my shoulder, she said to me:

"Papa George, I am not home-sick, but I should like all those whom we love to be here this evening—mamma and the boys, and——"

She hesitated.

"And Aleck," I added.

"Yes, and Aleck. Why doesn't he write to me, Papa George? He has never sent me so much as *one* line: and in his letters to you he never writes my name. I think that's so queer. Do you think that's quite reasonable or just? I was always nice to him, and since I've been here I always send my regards, when I write to mamma, and I've even sent him quite a number of post-cards and he doesn't pay the *slightest* attention to them. Now, one of the first things you taught me, Papa George, was never to receive the slightest favor, no matter what it was, without acknowledging it with thanks. Did you forget to teach Aleck that, or is it only for girls?"

"Eda, you are not a little girl any more. You are a charming little woman. Now, be frank with me. I know that's the hardest thing to ask of a woman—"

"Papa George! Papa George! Take care! When wasn't I frank with you?"

She lifted her head from my shoulder, and taking my chin in her hand, looked steadily into my eyes.

"Yesterday, when you were tearing the letter which you had just received, and told me it was nothing at all."

"Yes, but that was because I was so ashamed to see myself asked in marriage by a man who had never spoken to me but once. I am not a prude. You know I am not, but I can't make you understand the kind of nausea or disgust that seizes me when I know I am loved by a man for whom I don't care the rap of my finger. Once I remember when I was playing games with some strange children, a boy kissed me. I was *furious*, and scratched him like a tiger. He still bears the marks of my nails, and likes to tease me by calling it a souvenir of me."

"What a cold little heart!" I said, jestingly.

"Ah! you know so well that it isn't. There's a world of love locked up in me ready to burst forth for the great Somebody, who doesn't seem to be in a hurry to come along with the key. But he must be like you and papa. Do you know, sometimes I think that I shall never meet him. You two, my two heroes, make all other men look so little in comparison."

"And Aleck, doesn't he have a tiny corner somewhere in your heart?"

"On the same level with you and papa? O, no! no! a thousand times, no."

"Did he ever tell you that he loves you?"

"No, but I know that he does. And that's funny, too: but it does not vex me to have him love me; for

he knows very well that on the day he tells me that he loves me, it's all over with our friendship."

I was a little piqued by her tone. I loved Aleck sincerely. I knew his Scotch fidelity, his big heart, his quick intelligence.

I threw away my cigar. I wanted to talk with her seriously.

"See here, little one. I said to you a moment ago that it was difficult for a woman to be frank. Sound your heart well, and tell me why you wish to hear directly from Aleck, if you do not love him?"

"But I didn't tell you that I didn't love him. I mean simply that I don't want to marry him. I don't love him *that way*."

"Very well, you aren't going to be forced or coaxed to marry him. Be sure of that. Nor need you marry anyone if you prefer to live single. I have known some very charming old maids, whose lives have been so full of service, whose big hearts have escaped from the little circle of maternity to warm and comfort hundreds of little children's hearts, so that I have thought it would have been a pity if they had ever married."

She laughed in a nervous way, then replied in her charmingly coquettish manner, "No, no, no—my heart isn't big enough to be a foundling asylum. I was made to love in a very narrow circle. I could love desperately: I feel it in me. Don't you think that there is a great difference between a simple feeling of companionship, and that—how shall I describe it?—that entire loss of yourself in another?"

"Yes, but I believe now, what I didn't believe at your age, that the feeling of companionship is the surest foundation for happiness in marriage."

"Papa George! fie! for shame!"

She pushed me away from her with an expression of extreme disapproval, as if I had just uttered a blasphemy.

"Yes. I understand, Eda. When the blood boils and the pulse beats fast in the presence of a beloved being, it seems impossible to believe that we can ever be indifferent in the same presence. But passionate love is a dream out of which marriage awakens us. We see clearly wide awake now; and are in a rage of hate and contempt over being deceived. We would like to crush the idol that we have adored."

"Papa George, have you ever loved passionately?"

"Yes."

"And you were deceived?"

"Yes."

"My poor papa," she stroked my face as she talked. "And you are so good, so noble. You were made for the supreme happiness, and you have missed it."

"No, Eda—I have known it in its purest intoxication, and I have escaped the long agony of being chained alive to a dead love. I regret nothing."

"No, Papa George, you are not quite frank now. You are talking as I did when I was a child and the bee stung me: do you remember? You pitied me, and I said it didn't hurt. I was so angry to think it dared sting me. I believe I even said that I liked it, didn't I?"

"Yes, you did, bless your brave little heart."

"No—I am not brave, when it comes to feelings of the heart. If I were deceived, where I loved, I should die of it. And I can't think you are entirely right about the love changing so sadly. Papa and mamma were quite happy, and papa was like me, he had fire in his veins. If he had been disappointed, he would have left mamma in a moment. He would not have remained chained, as you say, to a dead love, he who was so keenly alive. Of course mamma is another story. She is so calm. I don't think she was ever capable of losing herself entirely in another. *She* might very well content herself with your so-called companionship. It is funny, isn't it, but do you know, I never in the world

could speak to mamma about love. It seems to me that she would not understand, and that I should be doing something bold and immodest to speak to her about it. But you, you understand me, perfectly, in spite of all your frightful ideas of love, cooled by an old age, that is not yet yours."

I let her chatter away without interruption. I felt the immense distance of years that separated us. She was very young; I seemed, just now, to myself, very old. Why uselessly try to see with the same eyes? It is destined to be perpetually renewed—this enchanting moment of youth, and it is very wrong of us who are old to burn all this glittering gauze and these dazzling false jewels in the white fire of our experience. If we could succeed, what desolation would result! A world of celibates, among whom the laughter of children is never heard, nor the low murmur of passionate tenderness! No, it is far better as it is—this natural progress of springtime to winter, than a perpetual winter of ice and snow.

Seeing that I did not interrupt her, she continued with a triumphant little laugh.

"Ah! ha! You see you have nothing more to say, because there *is* nothing more to say."

She was right. There was nothing more to say. The great mistake that old age makes, is to wish to force its bitter experience on youth. But let us be just to both. The fruit has a right to say to the flower: "You live to produce me"; but it has not the right to say: "Make haste to drop your petals and exhale your perfumes and become like me." There is marvelous grace and beauty in this springtime of the fruit. Let the flower open slowly of itself, perfect itself, and gradually change. Every age has its own peculiar charm, but only on condition of remaining true to its own epoch: for the flower, beauty and grace: for the fruit, savor, the power to refresh and nourish, and to give promise of a continuance of life.

I did not sleep well that night. I saw that the inevitable experiences were commencing for these young hearts I loved, and that no experience of mine would avail them the least in the world. And, after all, it was a weakness to wish to spare them the pain which I myself had learned to bless as the source of power.

By dint of reasoning in this way, I recovered from my inquietude, and was content to let things take their natural course.

One morning, passing through the Villa Nazionale, we saw a crowd assembled near the fountain, and, attracted by curiosity, hastened to the spot. The crowd opened a way for us, and permitted us to see the object of attraction. It was a man who had committed suicide, and he lay on the ground in a pool of blood.

Eda turned pale as death, and I felt her arm tremble in mine.

"Terrible! terrible!" she said in a low trembling voice, and her eyes filled with tears. "And the world is so beautiful, life so glorious!"

A daily paper gave a brief report of the suicide, along with other suicides of the same character, under the headline:

"Tempête d'anime."

She brought the paper to me and silently pointed to the article. When I had read it, she said:

"When I saw him this morning, something awfully solemn came over me, and I said to myself: Poor wretch! You shall not die without having given some good impulse to another life. I shall be braver, calmer, more generous, and a wholly better woman for having seen you lying dead there."

The story was the old one of passion and despair, of folly and ardor carrying the day over duty, the fierce hunger for happiness scorning the thousand quiet avenues of it, and staking its all on the possession of a heart.

"Papa George, I see now that it is not good to love like that. I was talking nonsense the other night. It is a thousand times better to sleep and wake with grief, till time wears it away, than to rush desperately into eternal darkness. Life is good. I want to live; and don't you think, dearest, that we've had enough of Naples now?"

CHAPTER XVII

LOOKING AT PICTURES

WE went to Rome, Florence, Venice, where we gave a great deal of time to looking at pictures. Eda had already some acquaintance with the character of the old masters from my collection of photographs. It gave me a genuine pleasure to listen to the expression of a taste not spoiled by premeditation, or the reading of art criticism.

She very quickly distinguished her interest in a picture because of its history, from her interest in it as a work of art, and leaving aside dramatic action, ethical teaching, historical fidelity, went straight to the beauty and vigor of the representation, as it appealed to herself. It goes without saying that she was not always in accord with the stars and double stars of her guide-book; and that they were sometimes her despair, until I said to her one day: "Never mind, my girl, what the paper and ink say. See with your own eyes and be frank with yourself. Don't be afraid to confess that you can't see a picture in smears and blotches, no matter what it is labeled."

"Oh, no, that doesn't bother me. I begin even now to respect those old cracked coffee-colored canvases of the early Christian painters: for, at least, they *did* try to paint for people with normal eyes, who see things whole, and not smeared and in pieces. They didn't think that a head hasn't a face; they put eyes and nose and mouth into it. They respected the body and gave it *some* form. But it is Ruskin and that lovely little book, "Mornings in Florence," that have made me feel *such* a Pariah, and as if I had no right to look at pictures, at all. And I *did* try so hard to see the St. Louis

in St. Croce, and had to go back to the book to see it. I could get nothing from the fresco itself. Do put me in countenance a little, and tell me that you weren't enraptured either. And I had an opera glass, too, you know; and did just what he said. I really *wanted* to see. It is so beautiful to have a genuine admiration all *your own*."

"That's it, Eda, *all your own*; borrowed admirations never thrill anything but the tongue. Ruskin's little book, as you say, is a very lovely one, and the writer himself perhaps the most inspiring of our century, but he has created an eruption of factitious admiration that he himself would be the very first one to deplore. Giotto was an artist of great power from the direct simplicity of his work; but to expect to see in him all that Ruskin does, to expect to buy, with a pair of opera glasses, the Ruskin temperament, the Ruskin eye, is the absurdest thing in the world: and ten thousand people may look at Giotto's St. Louis without feeling the emotions which stirred Ruskin when he saw it. Why, then, be ashamed, if he leaves you cold when he warmed the poet in Ruskin? When you can bring to art his knowledge, his vivid interests, his passionate admirations, his poetical temperament, which surrounds everything he sees with the radiant light of sentiment, his contempt for the vulgar shows of the world, for its riches, its ostentation, its sensual pleasures, you can hope to feel something of the sentiment which filled him when he looked on Giotto. It was not the artist's work which he saw; it was the life of King Louis, its perfect chivalry, the poetry of its courage and devotion.

"So, my daughter, love the pictures that speak to you, though they may be voiceless for others. Don't get into your head the absurd idea that you can know art by reading criticisms of it, instead of going directly to the pictures themselves, to see how it goes with you there. Don't be afraid of the stars and double stars in the catalogues, and think yourself in duty bound to be en-

raptured wherever you find them. Make your own stars: and be very glad if one picture in a thousand gives you an emotion and the desire to see it again.

"If the admiration which many of the allegorical pictures of the old masters were well traced to its source it would resolve itself into that very ordinary, complacent self-love, which the admirer feels in discovering to his satisfaction the secret of a problem. It is identical with that which we feel in translating a difficult passage in classic literature; or in studying a meaning into an obscure line of Robert Browning. The student is proud of himself at having so much intelligence: and confuses the admiration which he feels for himself with that which he thinks the object of his study ought to excite. There is no subtler form of self-love than that."

We traveled in Switzerland, Austria, Germany, France, Holland, Russia, until we began to feel the power to enjoy exhausted in us—and to stand in the presence of beauty and feel no thrill from it, is the most humiliating and arid experience of an intelligent mind.

It was, then, that Eda said to me one day:

"Papa George, I am very, very tired of being a traveled tramp, aren't you? I am getting hungry for my own people, my own country, and my own little corner of the woods near the bay: aren't you? You may talk as you please of universal fraternity, but there is a family bond, a national tie, stronger than any other; don't you think so?"

"Yes. We are beginning now to repeat the experiences, which had no pleasure or value except in novelty. It is time to go home. We are carrying abundant stores of recollection to enjoy, as we rest."

If I had had the least doubt in the world, which I hadn't, with regard to whether she was one of those whose mind needs continual changes, and who acquire from their travels nothing but a number of bizarre tastes, that make them discontented at home and the despair of their friends, her home-coming would have completely reassured me.

CHAPTER XVIII

SEED-TIME AND HARVEST

WHAT a holiday it was for us all, that October day of the home-coming! The great European galleries were far away, but all out-doors was a living art gallery;—white clouds curdled against the perfect blue, oaks and maples aflame with color, the sun shining softly down on it all. What warm heart beating, what smiles changing into tears of joy, what glad cries of mutual pleasure, what an aimless going and coming, and forgetting of what one started to do, and Abby taking me apart to say:

“ You have brought me back the same girl you took away. You have not spoiled her.”

She was growing prematurely white, no trace now of the rich brown tint in the hair, and her face looked worn and thin.

“ I have missed you both very much,” she said. “ But you will see that I shall grow young again, now you are back.”

She kept her word. In a few weeks one would have hardly recognized her. The tense, worn look wore away from her face; little by little, it gave way to an expression of unusual sweetness. Had she feared that she would never see us again? I do not know.

To tell the truth, another interest was absorbing me. Aleck had been working enormously during our absence. He had not written me that he was on the eve of a great discovery. Like all serious workers, he had his secrets that he could not reveal, any more than the tree can upturn its roots to the sun. We found him pale with protracted hours of study, his hands blackened and burned, his eyes sunken, his face thin, but luminous.

with the subtle fire of thought. Never had he appeared to me so virile, so handsome, so full of force; and when these two beautiful creatures, Eda and he, looked at each other, after their long absence, and I saw the swift color flame into their faces, and their hands tremble as they touched, I knew that they belonged to each other; and love again seemed as beautiful and glorious as in the days of my youth.

If I were a novelist, I might write a pretty idyl of the progress of this love as yet unconfessed, that had, like all loves, its days of radiant sunshine and of misty gloom. For even the springtime of love has its rainy days, in the midst of its odorous flowers, dewy grass, and enchanting bird-songs.

They were married in the spring following our return. Aleck built a beautiful cottage on a piece of ground which I gave him—a, lovely incline, looking down into the bay.

Eda begged me to go to live with them, but I was inexorable.

“But, Papa George,” she cried, her sweet eyes brimming with tears, “it is really living like an egotist to stay among those miserable old books, when you might double our pleasure, and add to your own, I know it, by coming and living with us. Aren’t you happy with me?”

“Perfectly happy, little one.”

“Well, and I am happy, too, with you: and don’t you see, my love of a papa, that I am so used to having you about me, now, that I can’t get on without you? You suit me to a T, in everything you say and do. Something of myself leaves me when you go away. I have only half my joy, half my wits, when you are gone. *I need you! I need you!* I can’t be weaned yet!” The pretty lips trembled; she laid her head on my shoulder, and cried like a child.

Yes, she loved me, my daughter, my Eda: and she was very, very dear to me. For a moment, I felt weak

enough to wish to yield to this sweet insistence. How beautiful to have always about me this rich heart, this admirable beauty and youth, the solace of my old age! But it was only a moment. The egotism of old age, living like a parasite on the sap of youth, has always seemed nauseous to me. And if ever I ought to keep my independence, it seemed to me that I ought to keep it now. So I lifted the dear head, kissed the warm mouth, saying:

“ My Eda, you have sometimes praised my good sense; listen, now, to what the good sense says. You are a young married woman, and all your happiness depends upon the harmony which exists between yourself and your husband. I am glad to see that the love between you is not the intense egotism of two who absorb each other: such a love as that ends by a paralysis of all the moral faculties. It is an obsession that narrows and subjugates us; yet a man and wife should be *first* to each other. What rôle have you offered me? I enter your house. I am, at first, the third person, loved by both of you; but I shall become, insensibly, either the second, or nothing at all. From day to day, an insensible attraction will draw you nearer either to him or to me. I shall become either more and more isolated near you, or more and more the companion of your leisure, the sharer of your thoughts; and one day, of us three, there will be one who is solitary. But that rôle of solitude belongs to *me*, not to your husband: or your marriage is a failure. And I can best play the rôle in my own house. I have had you all to myself for two years. I will not share you with anyone in the same house. In your home, your husband must be the supreme attraction. You are united to a superior man, of whom you may justly be proud. He has a clear, active mind full of noble curiosity; and, one day, his solitary researches are to enrich the human race. You are to be his helpmate in the best sense of the word, and his source of joy and relaxation. You

must spare to him his leisure as much as possible; take upon yourself those annoying domestic details, which eat up a man's time and give him nothing but worry in return. I should be ashamed of you, if you were not willing to do this. There are so many women who have but one idea of marriage. It is to procure for themselves an advantageous *milieu*, in which they can shine by the brilliancy of their beauty or their intellect. They are deadly parasites that suck the life-sap from many a noble man, and condemn him to life-long obscurity and slavish toil. That is man's punishment for having said to woman: You were born to lean on me. They do lean on him, but so heavily as to crush him, by the demands of their enormous vanity and their cold-hearted selfishness. I have given you the best possible education, so that you might have an interior wealth, from which you could draw in time of need. I do not wish you to live the narrow, jealous, exacting life of the heart, alone, in which so many women live exclusively; and just as your husband has his world of thought and study into which you cannot fully enter, so you will have your individual tastes and interests, which will make life well worth living, when his lips are not touching yours. For to make him happy, and to be happy yourself, you must in some measure learn to live alone, to stand firmly on your two feet, without leaning on anyone. You must learn to digest your private griefs into better thought and finer action; for you must not expect to grow old without knowing pain. Nobody escapes it: it lies either behind him, is present with him, or lies in ambush in the future. And never forget this: The sorrows of a beloved woman have a charm, in the commencement, for the man who loves her. They give him the best of excuses for lavishing on her the caresses with which his heart is running over. He adores her, in this complete abandonment, in which she turns to him alone for her consolation. He savors these tears, the traces of which he

kisses away. *But not for a very long time.* A man is not made, like a woman, to lose himself long in the griefs of another. He wearies, he yawns, he looks askance at the door, then at his watch, and finds an excuse for escaping. Health, vigor, the sunlight of the mind, have stronger and more permanent attractions for him. Then, don't abuse your husband's sympathy. Use it sparingly, that it may be genuine. Don't be deceived by the maxim that 'pity is akin to love'; for pity often implies a sentiment of superiority, a little shade of contempt, which in the end is fatal to love; or, pressed too far, changes to weariness.

"And, Eda dearest, one thing more. Guard in yourself as nature's richest gift to woman—the mother instinct, the love of the arms of little children around your neck. There, love, don't cry; don't think I mean to quietly slip away from your life—I couldn't, if I tried. I shall see you every day. Isn't your house built so that I can wave my hand to you from my front yard? That signal to you will be my sunrise. I shall go back to my books and my work, warmed, exhilarated.

"There, love, are a great many counsels from a man who has never known the joys of domestic life, except at another man's hearth; and who has seen, at times, why the fire doesn't burn well, there. One forgets, sometimes, to throw new logs on to the dying embers, and the room grows chill, where two sit shivering whose love once made the warmth of it."

I was silent, then, and smiled at her, caressing her.

"Yes," she said thoughtfully, "a great many counsels, a great deal of good sense, my love of a papa, and I am so young, so ignorant, so foolish, that perhaps I don't well see the reach of it all. But there is one thing that I see clearly, and that is that you have suffered. That hurts me, just as it did that night in Naples, when we talked on the balcony. Do you remember?"

“Yes.”

“Tell me, again, that you are happy, now; that all that suffering is past, like *les neiges d'antan*.”

“Yes, Eda, all past; and far from regretting the sorrows, I would not for much have wanted their discipline.”

“Must one suffer in order to think, to know, to feel deeply?”

“I think so.”

“But you do not wish *me* to suffer?”

“No.”

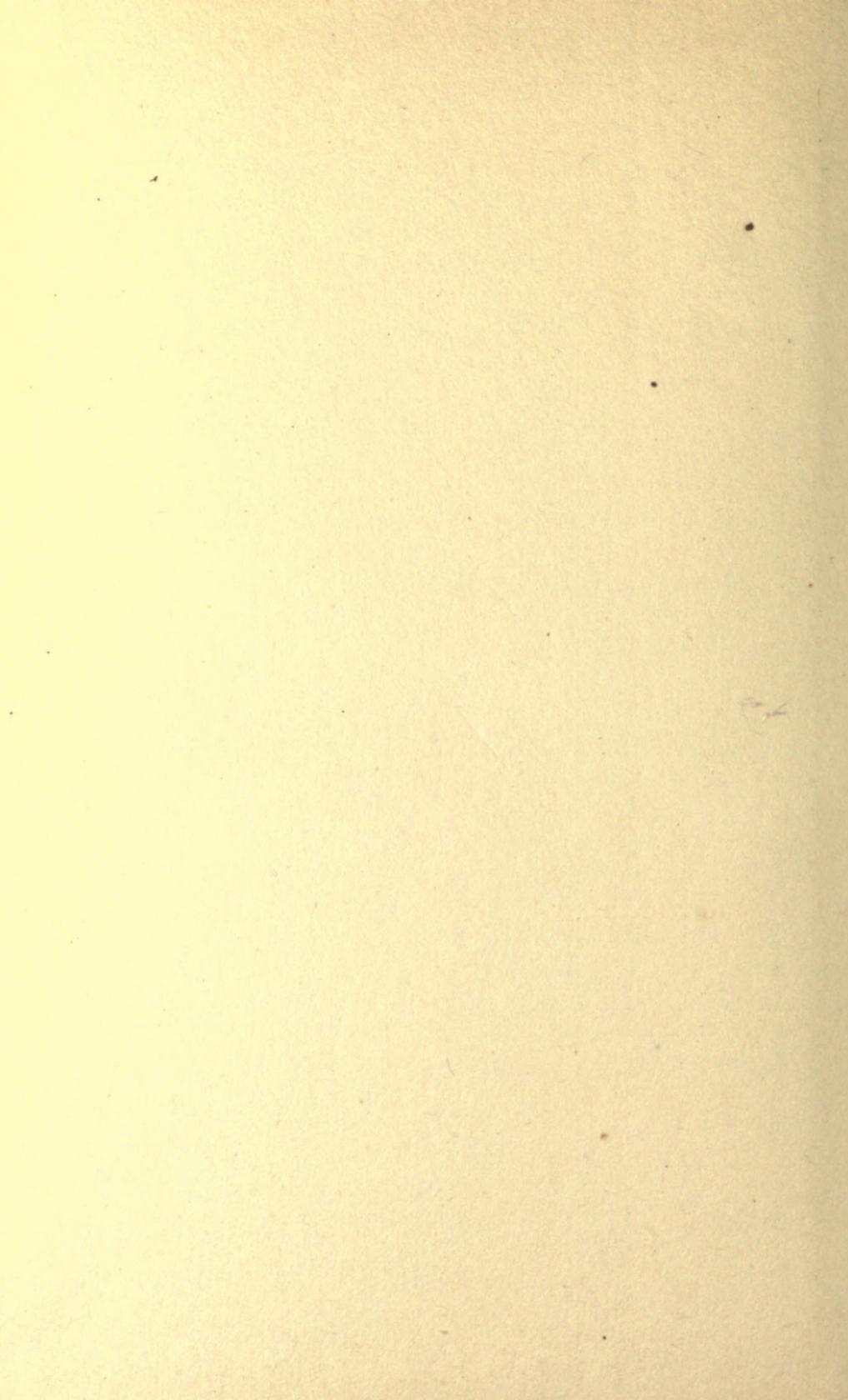
“Explain that to me.”

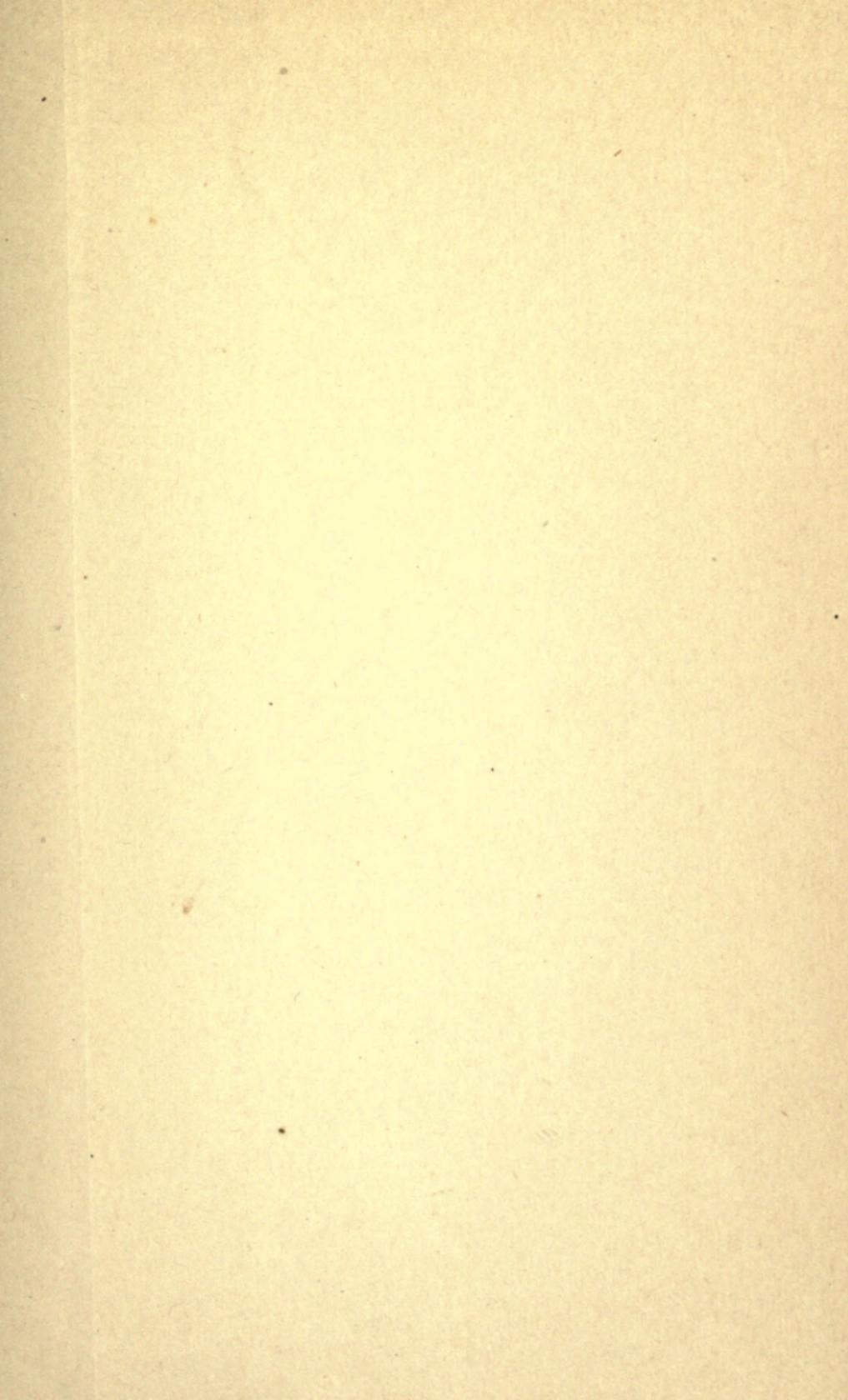
“It is not necessary for everybody to think, and know, and feel deeply.”

“Very well, then, I am to be satisfied with happy ignorance; and I mean to show you that I can love you tenderly, faithfully all my life without getting into trouble with Aleck, or threatening our happiness. But I shall give you your full liberty, you dear, delightful Recluse. I commence to divine that solitude is, after all, your real life. But I shall always be within call. I am always at home to you, and when your books grow mute and won't talk to you any more, I shall do *wonders* to suffer, in order to know enough to talk to you, so that you won't yawn.”

She has kept her word, my beautiful Eda. She has overwhelmed me with love and care without being importunate or wearisome: and my old age passes like those lovely autumn days veiled in luminous haze, when the air is heavy with the odor of ripening fruits, and the forests are aglow.

THE END







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